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# MODERN GREEK FOLKLORE

AND

# ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
London: FETTER LANE, E.C.
C. F. CLAY, MANAGER

Edinburgh: 100, PRINCES STREET
Berlin: A. ASHER AND CO.
Leipzig: F. A. BROCKHAUS
New York: G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
Bombay and Calcutta: MACMILLAN AND CO., LTD.

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# MODERN GREEK FOLKLORE
AND
# ANCIENT GREEK RELIGION

## A STUDY IN SURVIVALS

BY

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Cambridge:
at the University Press
1910

Cambridge:
PRINTED BY JOHN CLAY, M.A.
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

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# PREFACE.

THIS book is the outcome of work undertaken in Greece during my two years' tenure of the Craven Studentship from 1898 to 1900. It is therefore my first duty gratefully to commemorate John, Lord Craven, to whose benefactions of two and a half centuries ago I owed my opportunity for research.

The scheme of work originally proposed was the investigation of the customs and superstitions of modern Greece in their possible bearing upon the life and thought of ancient Greece; and to the Managers of the Craven Fund at that time, with whom was associated Mr R. A. Neil of Pembroke College to whose memory I have dedicated this book, I render hearty thanks for their willingness to encourage a venture new in direction, vague in scope, and possibly void of result.

The course of research proposed was one which required as the first condition of any success considerable readiness in speaking and understanding the popular language, and to the attainment of this my first few months were necessarily devoted. When once the ear has become accustomed to the modern pronunciation, a knowledge of ancient Greek makes for rapid progress; and some three or four months spent chiefly in the *cafés* of small provincial towns rendered me fairly proficient in ordinary conversation. Subsequent practice enabled me also to follow conversations not intended for my ear; and on more than one occasion I obtained from the talk of peasants thus overheard information which they might have been chary of imparting to a stranger.

The time at my disposal however, after I had sufficiently mastered the language, would have been far too short to allow of any complete enquiry into the beliefs and customs of the country, had it not been for the existence of two books, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen und das Hellenische Alterthum* by Bernhard Schmidt, and Μελέτη ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου τῶν νεωτέρων Ἑλλήνων by Professor Polites of Athens University, which at once supplied me with a working knowledge of the subject which I was studying and suggested certain directions in which further research might profitably be pursued. My debt to these two books is repeatedly acknowledged in the following

pages; and if I have given references to Schmidt's work more frequently than to that of Polites, my reason is not that I owe less to the latter, but merely that the former is more generally accessible.

In pursuit of my task I followed no special system. I have known of those who professed to obtain a complete knowledge of the folklore of a given village in the course of a few hours' visit, and whose method was to provide themselves with an introduction to the schoolmaster, who would generally be not even a native of the place, and to read out to him a formidable *questionnaire*, in the charitable and misplaced expectation that the answers given would be prompted not by courtesy and loquacity, which are the attributes of most Greeks, but by veracity, which is the attribute of few. The formal interview with paper and pencil is in my opinion a mistake. The 'educated' Greek whose pose is to despise the traditions of the common-folk will discourse upon them no less tediously than inaccurately for the sake of having his vapourings put on record; but the peasant who honestly believes the superstitions and scrupulously observes the customs of which he may happen to speak is silenced at once by the sight of a note-book. Apart however from this objection to being interviewed, the country-folk are in general communicative enough. They do not indeed expect to be plied with questions until their own curiosity concerning the new-comer has been satisfied, and even then any questions on uncanny subjects must be discreetly introduced. But it is no difficult matter to start some suitable topic. A wedding, a funeral, or some local *fête* perhaps is in progress, and your host is eager to have the distinction of escorting you to it and explaining all the customs appropriate to the occasion. You have been taken to see the village-church, and some offering there dedicated, to which you call attention, elicits the story of some supernatural 'seizure' and miraculous cure. You express a desire to visit some cave which you have observed in the mountain-side, and the dissuasion and excuses which follow form the prelude to an account of the fearful beings by whom it is haunted. Your guide crosses himself or spits before fording a stream, and you enquire, once safely across, what is the particular danger at this spot. Your mule perhaps rolls with your baggage in the same stream, and the muleteer's imprecations suggest luridly novel conceptions of the future life.

Much also may be effected by playing upon patriotism or vanity or, let it be confessed, love of lucre. You relate some story heard

in a neighbouring village or praise some custom there observed, and the peasant's parochial patriotism is up in arms to prove the superiority of his native hamlet. You show perhaps some signs of incredulity (but not until your informant is well launched upon his panegyric), and his wounded pride bids him call in his neighbours to corroborate his story. Or again you may hint at a little largesse, not of course for your host—only witches and the professional reciters of folk-tales and ballads are entitled to a fee—but on behalf of his children, and he may pardon and satisfy what might otherwise have seemed too inquisitive a curiosity.

Such are the folk to whom I am most beholden, and how shall I fitly acknowledge my debt to them? Their very names maybe were unknown to me even then, or at the most a 'John' or 'George' sufficed; and they in turn knew not that I was in their debt. You, muleteers and boatmen, who drove shrewd bargains for your services and gave unwittingly so much beside, and you too, cottagers, who gave a night's lodging to a stranger and never guessed that your chatter was more prized than your shelter, how shall I thank you? Not severally, for I cannot write nor could you ever read the list of acknowledgements due; but to you all, Georges and Johns, Demetris and Constantines, and rare anachronistic Epaminondases, in memory of services rendered unawares, greeting from afar and true gratitude!

Nor must I omit to mention the assistance which I have derived from written sources. In recent times it has been a favourite amusement with Greeks of some education to compile little histories of the particular district or island in which they live, and many of these contain a chapter devoted to the customs and superstitions of the locality. From these, as also from the records of travel in Greece, particularly those of French writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, I have culled much that is valuable.

Nearly ten years have passed since my return from Greece, and such leisure as they have allowed has been devoted to co-ordinating the piecemeal information which I personally obtained or have gathered from the writings of others, and to examining its bearing upon the life and thought of Ancient Greece. In the former half of this task I have but followed in the steps of Bernhard Schmidt and of Polites, who had already presented a coherent, if still incomplete, account of the folklore of Modern

Greece, and my work has been mainly to check, to correct, and to amplify; but for the latter half I would ask the indulgent consideration which may fairly be extended to a pioneer. Analogies and coincidences in the beliefs and customs of modern and of ancient Greece have indeed been pointed out by others; but no large attempt has previously been made to trace the continuity of the life and thought of the Greek people, and to exhibit modern Greek folklore as an essential factor in the interpretation of ancient Greek religion.

It is my hope that this book will prove interesting not to Greek scholars only, but to readers who have little or no acquaintance with Greek. All quotations whether from the ancient or modern language are translated, and references to ancient and modern writers are distinguished by the use of the ordinary Latinised names and titles in the case of the former, and the retention of the Greek character for denoting the latter. As regards the transliteration of modern Greek words, I have made no attempt to represent the exact sound, except to indicate in some words the accented syllable and to make the obvious substitution of the English *v* for the Greek *β*; but to replace *γ* by *gh* and *δ* by *dh*, as is sometimes done, gives to words an uncouth appearance without assisting the majority of readers in their pronunciation.

It remains only to express my thanks to the reviser of my proofs, Mr W. S. Hadley of Pembroke College, but these are the hardest to express adequately. I was conscious of making no small demand on the kindness of the Tutor of a large College when I asked him to do me this service; and I am conscious now that any words in acknowledgement of his kindness are a poor expression of my gratitude for the generous measure of time and of trouble which he has expended on each page.

Lastly I would thank the Syndics of the University Press for their willingness to undertake the publication of this book, and the staff of the Press for their unfailing courtesy in the course of its preparation.

J. C. L.

Pembroke College,
Cambridge,
*December* 31, 1909.

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# CHAPTER I.

## INTRODUCTORY.

### § 1. Modern Folklore as a source for the study of Ancient Religion.

The sources of information most obviously open to the student of ancient Greek religion are the Art and the Literature of ancient Greece; and the idea that modern Greece can have any teaching to impart concerning the beliefs of more than two thousand years ago seems seldom to have been entertained. Just as we speak of ancient Greek as a dead language, and too often forget that many of the words and inflexions in popular use at the present day are identical with those of the classical period and even of the Homeric age, while many others, no longer identical, have suffered only a slight modification, so are we apt to think of Greek paganism as a dead religion, and do not enquire whether the beliefs and customs of the modern peasant may not be a direct heritage from his classical forefathers. And yet, if any such heritage exist, there is clearly a fresh source of knowledge open to us, from which to supplement and to correct the lessons of Art and Literature.

Art, by its very nature, serves rather as illustration than as proof of any theory of ancient religion. Sculpture has preserved to us the old conceptions of the divine personalities. Vase-paintings record many acts of ritual and scenes of worship. Architectural remains allow us to restore in imagination the grandeur of holy places. But these things are only the externals of religion: they need an interpreter, if we would understand the spirit which informed them: and however able the interpreter, the material with which he deals is so small a remnant of the treasures of ancient art, that from day to day

some fresh discovery may subvert his precariously founded theories. Though all would acknowledge how fruitful in religious suggestion the evidence of art has proved when handled by competent critics, none would claim that that evidence either in its scope, which the losses of time have limited, or in its accuracy, which depends upon conjectural interpretation, is a complete or infallible guide to the knowledge of ancient religion.

From literature more might be expected, and more indeed is forthcoming, though not perhaps where the modern mind, with its tendency to methodical analysis, would look for it. If anyone should attempt to classify ancient Greek literature in modern fashion, under the headings of religion, science, history, drama, and so forth, he would remark one apparent deficiency. While history, philosophy, and poetry of every kind are amply represented and, however much has perished to be read no more, the choicest blossoms and richest fruit of Greek toil in these fields have been preserved to us, religion seems at first sight to have been almost barren of literary produce. The department of religion pure and simple would have little beyond an Hesiodic Theogony or some Orphic Hymns to exhibit,—and even these have little enough bearing upon real religion. In short, it is not on any special branch of Greek literature, but rather upon the whole bulk thereof, that the student of Greek religion must rely. He must recognize that a religious spirit pervades the whole; that there is hardly a book in the language but has some allusion to religious beliefs and customs, to cults and ceremonies and divine personalities. And while recognizing this, he must still admit the fact that nowhere is there found any definite exposition of accepted beliefs as a whole, any statement of doctrine, any creed which except a man believe he cannot be saved. How are we to reconcile these two facts,—the constant presence of religion in all Greek literature, and the almost total absence of any literature appertaining to religion only? The answer to this question must be sought in the character of the religion itself.

Greek religion differed from the chief now existing religions of the world in its origin and development. It had no founder. Its sanction was not the *ipse dixit* of some inspired teacher. It possessed nothing analogous to the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

or the Koran. It was a free, autochthonous growth, evolved from the various hopes and fears of a whole people. If we could catch a glimpse of it in its infancy, we should probably deny to it the very name of religion, and call it superstition or folklore. Great teachers indeed arose, like Orpheus, advocating special doctrines and imposing upon their followers special rules of life. Great centres of religious influence were developed, such as Delphi, exercising a general control over rites and ceremonies. But no single preacher, no priesthood, succeeded in dominating over the free conscience of the people. Nothing was imposed by authority. In belief and in worship each man was a law unto himself; and so far as there were any accepted doctrines and established observances, these were not the subtle inventions of professional theologians or an interested priesthood, but were based upon the hereditary and innate convictions of the whole Greek race. The individual was free to believe what he would and what he could; it was the general, if vague, consensus of the masses which constituted the real religion of Greece. The *vox populi* fully established itself as the *vox dei*.

Again in this popular religion, when it had emerged from its earliest and crudest form and had reached the definitely anthropomorphic stage in which we know it, we can discern no trace of any tendency towards monotheism. The idea of a single supreme deity, personal or impersonal, appealed only to some of the greatest thinkers: the mass of the people remained frankly polytheistic. For this reason the development of Greek religion proceeded on very different lines from that of Hebrew religion. The earliest Jewish conception of a God 'walking in the garden in the cool of the day' was certainly no less anthropomorphic than the Homeric presentation of the Olympian deities: but the subsequent growth of Judaism was like that of some tall straight palm tree lifting its head to purer air than is breathed by men; whereas Greek religion resembled rather the cedar spreading wide its branches nearer the earth. The Jew, by concentrating in one unique being every transcendent quality and function, exalted gradually his idea of godhead far above the anthropomorphic plane: the Greek multiplied his gods to be the several incarnations of passions and powers and activities pertaining also, though in less fulness, to mankind.

It is obvious that in point of simplicity and consistency the monotheistic system must prove superior. As the worshipper's intellectual and spiritual capacities develop, he discards the older and cruder notions in favour of a more enlightened ideal. Abraham's crude conception of the deity as a being to whom even human sacrifice would be acceptable was necessarily rejected by an humaner age to whom was delivered the message 'I will have mercy and not sacrifice.' In the growth of Greek polytheism, on the contrary, the new did not supersede the old, but was superimposed upon it. Fresh conceptions were expressed by the creation or acceptance of fresh gods, but the venerable embodiments of more primitive beliefs were not necessarily displaced by them. The development of humaner ideas in one cult was no bar to the retention of barbarous rites by another. The same deity under different titles of invocation (*ἐπωνυμίαι*) was invested with different and even conflicting characters: and reversely the same religious idea found several expressions in the cults of widely different deities. The forms of worship, viewed in the mass, were of an inconsistent and chaotic complexity. Human sacrifice, we may be sure, was a thing abhorrent to the majority of the cults of Zeus: yet Lycaean Zeus continued to exact his toll of human life down to the time of Pausanias[1]. The worship of Dionysus embodied something of the same religious spirit which pervaded the teachings of Orpheus and the mysteries of Demeter, and came to be closely allied with them: yet neither the austerity of Orphism nor the real spirituality of the Eleusinian cult succeeded in mitigating the wild orgies of the Bacchant or in repressing the savage rite of *omophagia* in which drunken fanatics tore a bull to pieces with their teeth. Aphrodite was worshipped under two incompatible titles: in the *rôle* of the 'Heavenly' (*οὐρανία*), says Artemidorus[2], she looks favourably upon marriage and childbirth and the home life, while under her title of 'Popular' (*πάνδημος*) she is hostile to the matron, and patroness of laxer ties. It is needless to multiply illustrations. The forms in which the religious spirit of Greece found embodiment are beyond question confused and mutually inconsistent. The same religious idea might be expressed in so great a variety of rites, and the same divine personality might be associated with so great a

[1] VIII. 38. 7. [2] *Oneirocr.* II. 34 and 37.

variety of ideas, that no formal exposition of Greek religion as a whole was possible. The verbal limitations of a creed, a *summa theologiae*, would have been too narrow for the free, imaginative faith of Greece. It was a necessary condition of Hellenic polytheism that, as it came into being without any personal founder, without any authoritative sacred books, so in its development it should be hampered and confined neither by priestcraft nor by any literature purely and distinctively religious. The spirit which manifested itself in a myriad forms of worship could not brook the restraint of any one form of words.

And not only would it have been difficult to give adequate expression to the essential ideas of Greek religion, but there was no motive for attempting the task. Those of the philosophers who dealt with religion wrote and taught for the reason that they had some new idea, some fresh doctrine, to advance. Plato certainly abounds in references to the popular beliefs of his age: but his object is not to expound them for their own sake: rather he utilizes them as illustration and ornament of his own philosophical views: his treatment of them in the main is artistic, not scientific. In fact there was no one interested in giving to popular beliefs an authoritative and dogmatic expression. There was no hierarchy concerned to arrest the free progress of thought or to chain men's minds to the faith of their forefathers. A summary of popular doctrines, if it could have been written, would have had no readers, for the simple reason that the people felt their religion more truly and fully than the writer could express it: and few men have the interests of posterity so largely at heart, as to write what their own contemporaries will certainly not read. Thus it appears that there was neither motive nor means for treating the popular religion in literary form: to formulate the common-folk's creed, to analyse the common-folk's religion, was a thing neither desired nor feasible.

But because we observe an almost total absence of distinctively religious literature, we need not for that reason be surprised at the constant presence of religious feeling in all that a Greek wrote or sang. Rather it was consistent with that freedom and that absence of all control and circumscription which we have noted, that religion should pervade the whole life of the people, whose hearts were its native soil, and should consequently pervade

also the literature in which their thoughts and doings are recorded. For religion with them was not a single and separate department of their civilisation, not an avocation from the ordinary pursuits of men, but rather a spirit with which work and holiday, gaiety and gloom, were alike penetrated. We should be misled by the modern devotion to dogma and definite formulae of faith, were we to think that so vague a religion as Greek polytheism was any the less an abiding force, any the less capable of inspiring genuine enthusiasm and reverence. It is not hard to imagine the worshipper animated for the time by one emotion only, his mind void of all else and flooded with the one idea incarnate in the divine being at whose altar he sat in supplication. It is impossible really to misdoubt the strength and the depth of Greek religious sentiment, however multifarious and even mutually contradictory its modes of display. A nation who peopled sky and earth and sea with godlike forms; who saw in every stream and glen and mountain-top its own haunting, hallowing presence, and, ill-content that nature alone should do them honour, sought out the loveliest hills and vales in all their lovely land to dedicate there the choicest of their art; who consecrated with lavish love bronze and marble, ivory and gold, all the best that wealth could win and skill adorn, in honour of the beings that were above man yet always with him, majestic as Zeus, joyous as Dionysus, grave as Demeter, light as Aphrodite, yet all divine; such a nation, though it knew nought of inspired books and formulated creeds, can be convicted of no shortcoming in real piety and devotion.

Their gods were very near to those whom they favoured; no communion or intercourse was beyond hope of attainment; gods fought in men's battles, guided men's wanderings, dined at men's boards, and took to themselves mortal consorts; and when men grew degenerate and the race of heroes was no more, gods still held speech with them in oracles. Religious hopes, religious fears, were the dominant motive of the people's whole life. It was in religion that sculpture found its inspiration, and its highest achievements were in pourtraying deities. The theatre was a religious institution, and on the stage, without detriment to reverence, figured the Eumenides themselves. Religious duties were excuse enough for Sparta to hang back from defending the freedom of Greece. Religious scruples set enlightened Athens

in an uproar, because a number of idols were decently mutilated. Religious fears cost her the loss of the proudest armament that ever sailed from her shores. A charge of irreligion was pretext enough for condemning to death her noblest philosopher. In everything, great and small, the pouring of libations at the feast, the taking of omens before battle, the consulting of the Delphic oracle upon the most important or most trivial of occasions, the same spirit is manifest. Religion used or abused, piety or superstition, was to the Greeks an abiding motive and influence in all the affairs of life.

It is chiefly of these definite doings and customs that literature tells us, just as art depicts the *mise-en-scène* of religion. Yet it would be inconceivable that a people who displayed so strong and so abundant a religious feeling in all the circumstances and tasks of life, should not have pondered over the essential underlying questions of all religion, the nature of the soul and the mystery of life and death. Literature tells us that to their poets and philosophers these problems did present themselves, and many were the solutions which different thinkers propounded: but of the general sense of the people in this respect, of the fundamental beliefs which guided their conduct towards gods and men in this life and prompted their care for the dead, literature furnishes no direct statement: its evidence is fragmentary, casual, sporadic. Everywhere it displays the externals, but it leaves the inner spirit veiled. Literature as well as art needs an interpreter.

It is precisely in this task of interpretation that the assistance offered by the folklore of Modern Greece should be sought. It should be remembered that there is still living a people who, as they have inherited the land and the language, may also have inherited the beliefs and customs, of those ancients whose mazes of religion are bewildering without a guide who knows them. Among that still living people it is possible not only to observe acts and usages, but to enquire also their significance: and though some customs will undoubtedly be found either to be mere survivals of which the meaning has long been forgotten, or even to have been subjected to new and false interpretations, yet others, still rooted in and nourished by an intelligent belief, may be vital documents of ancient Greek life and thought.

## § 2. The survival of Ancient Tradition.

There may perhaps be some few who, quite apart from the continuity of the Hellenic race, a question with which I must deal later, would be inclined to pronounce the quest of ancient religion in modern folklore mere lost labour. The lapse, they may think, of all the centuries which separate the present day from the age of Hellenic greatness would in itself disfigure or altogether efface any tradition of genuine value. Such a view, however, is opposed to all the lessons that have of late years been gained from a more systematic study of the folklore of all parts of the world. Certain principles of magic and certain tendencies of superstition seem to obtain, in curiously similar form, among peoples far removed both in racial type and in geographical position. It is sometimes urged by way of explanation that the resources of the primitive mind are necessarily so limited, that many coincidences in belief and custom are only to be expected, and that therefore the similarity of form presented by some superstitions of widely separated peoples is no argument in favour of their common origin. But, for my part, when I consider such a belief as that in the Evil Eye, which possesses, I believe, an almost world-wide notoriety, I find it more reasonable to suppose that it was a tenet in the creed of some single primitive people, of whom many present races of the world are offshoots, and from whom they have inherited the superstition, than that scores or hundreds of peoples, who had long since diverged in racial type and dwelling and language, should subsequently have hit upon one uniform belief. Indeed it may be that in the future the study of folklore will become a science of no less value than the study of language, and that by a comparison of the superstitions still held by various sections of the human race it will be possible to adumbrate the beliefs of their remotest common ancestors as clearly as, by a comparison of their various speeches, the outlines of a common ancestral language have been, and are being, traced. The *data* of folklore are in the nature of things more difficult to collect, more comprehensive in scope, and more liable to misinterpretation, than the *data* of linguistic study; but none the less, when once there are labourers enough in the field, it is not beyond

hope that the laws which govern the tradition and modification of customs and beliefs may be found to be hardly less definite than the laws of language.

But comparative folklore is outside my present purpose. I assume only, without much fear of contradiction, that many of the popular superstitions and customs and magical practices still prevalent in the world date from a period far more remote than any age on which Greek history or archaeology can throw even a glimmering of light. If then I can show that among the Greek folk of to-day there still survive in full vigour such examples of primaeval superstition as the belief in 'the evil eye' and the practice of magic, I shall have established at least an antecedent probability that there may exist also vestiges of the religious beliefs and practices of the historical era.

The fear of 'the evil eye' (*τὸ κακὸ μάτι*, or simply *τὸ μάτι*[1],) is universal among the Greek peasantry, and fairly common though not so frankly avowed among the more educated classes. The old words *βασκαίνω* and *βασκανία* are still in use, but *ματιάζω* and *μάτιαγμα*[2], direct formations from the word *μάτι*, are more frequently heard. It would be difficult to say on what grounds this power of 'overlooking,' if I may use a popular English equivalent, is usually imputed to anyone. Old women are most generally credited with it, but not so much owing to any menacing appearance as because they are the chief exponents of witchcraft and it is only fitting that the wise woman of a village should possess the power of exercising the evil eye at will. These form therefore quite a distinct class from those persons whose eyes are suspected of exerting naturally and involuntarily a baneful influence. In the neighbourhood of Mount Hymettus it appears that blue eyes fall most commonly under suspicion: and this is the more curious because in Attica, with its large proportion of Albanian inhabitants, blue eyes are by no means rare. Possibly, however, it was the native Greeks' suspicion of the strangers who settled among them, which first caused this particular development of the belief in this district. Myself possessing eyes of the objectionable colour, I have more than once been somewhat taken aback at having my ordinary salutation (*'γειά σου*, 'health to you,') to some passing

[1] i.e. (*ὀμ*)*μάτι*(*ον*), diminutive of *ὄμμα*.

[2] Also locally *βιστυρά*, a word whose origin I cannot trace.

peasant answered only by the sign of the Cross. Fortunately in other localities I never to my knowledge inspired the same dread; had it been general, I should have been forced to abandon my project of enquiring into Greek folklore; for the risk of being 'overlooked' holds the Greek peasant, save for a few phrases of aversion, in awe-stricken silence. My impression is that any eyes which are peculiar in any way are apt to incur suspicion, and that in different localities different qualities, colouring or brilliance or prominence, excite special notice and, with notice, disfavour. The evil eye, it would seem, is a regular attribute both of the Gorgon and of the wolf; for both, by merely looking upon a man, are still believed to inflict some grievous suffering,—dumbness, madness, or death; and yet there is little in common between the narrow, crafty eye of the wolf and either the prominent, glaring eyes in an ancient Medusa's head or the passionate, seductive eyes of the modern Gorgon, unless it be that any fixed unflinching gaze is sufficient reason for alarm.

Some such explanation will best account for the strange vagary of superstition which brings under the category of the evil eye two classes of things which seemingly would have no connexion either with it or with each other, looking-glasses and the stars.

To look at oneself in a mirror is, in some districts, regarded as a dangerous operation, especially if it be prolonged. A bride, being specially liable to all sinister influences, is wise to forego the pleasure of seeing her own reflection in the glass; and a woman in child-bed, who is no less liable, is deprived of all chance of seeing herself by the removal of all mirrors from the room. The risk in all cases is usually greatest at night, and in the town of Sinasos in Cappadocia no prudent person would at that time incur it[1]. The reflection, it would seem, of a man's own image may put the evil eye upon him by its steady gaze: and it was in fear of such an issue that Damoetas, in the *Idylls* of Theocritus, after criticizing his own features reflected in some glassy pool, spat thrice into his bosom that he might not suffer from the evil eye[2].

The belief in a certain magical property of the stars akin to that of the evil eye is far more widely held. They are, as it were,

[1] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχελάου, ἡ Σινασός, p. 90.

[2] Theocr. *Id.* VI. 39.

the eyes of night, and in the darkness 'overlook' men and their belongings as disastrously as does the human eye in the day-time. Just as a woman after confinement is peculiarly liable to the evil eye and must have amulets hung about her and mirrors removed from her room, so must particular care be taken to avoid exposure to stellar influence. Sonnini de Magnoncourt, who had some medical experience in Greece, speaks authoritatively on this subject. According to the popular view, he says, she must not let herself be 'seen by a star'; and if she goes out before the prescribed time,—according to this authority, only eight days, but now preferably forty days, from the birth of the child,—she is careful to return home and to shut herself up in her room by sunset, and after that hour to open neither door nor window, for fear that a star may surprise her and cause the death of both mother and child[1]. So too in the island of Chios, if there is occasion to carry leaven from one house to another, it must be covered up,—in the day-time 'to prevent it from being seen by any strange eye,' at night 'to prevent it from being seen by the stars': for if it were 'overlooked' by either, the bread made with it would not rise[2]. Such customs show clearly that the stars are held to exercise exactly the same malign influence as the human eye: the same simple phrases denote in Greek the operation of either, and the 'overlooking' of either has the same blighting effect.

The range of this mischievous influence—for I now take it that the evil eye and the stars are indistinguishable in their ill effects—is very large. Human beings are perhaps most susceptible to it. In some districts[3] indeed new-born infants up to the time of their baptism are held to be immune; till then they are the children of darkness, and the powers of darkness do not move against them. But in general no one at any moment of his life is wholly secure. Amulets however afford a reasonable safety at ordinary times; it is chiefly in the critical hours of life, at marriage and at the birth of children, that the fear of the evil eye is lively and the precautions against it more elaborate. Animals also may be affected. Horses and mules are very commonly protected

[1] Sonnini de Magnoncourt, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie*, vol. II. p. 99.

[2] Κωνστ. Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, p. 360, cf. Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων, vol. III. p. 146.

[3] In Athens, among other places, cf. Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων, vol. III. p. 69.

by amulets hung round their necks, and this is the original purpose of the strings of blue beads with which the cab-horses of Athens are often decorated. The shepherd too has cause for anxiety on behalf of his flock, and, when a bad season or disease diminishes the number of his lambs, is apt to re-echo the pastoral complaint,

> Nescio quis teneros oculus mihi fascinat agnos[1].
> 'Some jealous eye "o'erlooks" my tender lambs.'

And the pernicious influence makes itself felt in even a lower scale of life. In the neighbourhood of Sparta, where there is a considerable silk industry, the women believe that silk-worms are susceptible of mischief from the evil eye; and the same superstition is recorded by de Magnoncourt from Chios.

Of inanimate things, those most easily damaged in a similar way are leaven, salt, and vinegar,—as being possessed of quickening or preservative properties to which the blighting, destructive power of the evil eye or of the stars is naturally opposed. The precautions to be observed in carrying leaven from house to house have already been noticed. Equal care is required in the making of the bread. It often happens, so I have been told, that when a woman is kneading, some malicious neighbour will come in, ostensibly for a chat, and put the evil eye upon the leaven; and unless the woman perceives what is going on and averts disaster by a special gesture which turns the evil influence against the intruder, nothing to call bread will be baked that day. Similarly it is unwise to borrow or to give away either salt or vinegar at night[2]; but if it is necessary, it is prudent to take precautions to prevent its exposure to the stars, which may even be cheated of their prey by some such device as calling the vinegar (*ξεῖδι*) 'syrup' (*γλυκάδι*) in asking for it[3]. Further, an object which has been exposed to the stars may even carry the infection, as it were, to those who afterwards use it. For this reason the linen and clothes of a mother and her new-born infant must never be left out of doors at night[4].

The precaution, as I have said, most commonly adopted is the wearing of amulets. The articles which have the greatest intrinsic

[1] Verg. *Ecl.* III. 103.
[2] In Sinasos the rule is strict in regard to both, cf. Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχελάου, *ἡ Σινασός*, pp. 83, 93.
[3] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. *τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, vol. III. p. 146.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 64.

virtue for this purpose are garlic, bits of blue stone or glass often in the form of beads, old coins, salt, and charcoal: but many other things, by their associations, may be rendered efficacious. The stump of a candle burnt on some high religious festival, or a shred of the Holy Shroud used on Good Friday, is by no means to be despised; and the bones of a bat or a snake's skin over which a witch has muttered her incantations acquire thereby an equal merit. But such charms as these are *objets de luxe*; the ordinary man contents himself with the commoner articles whose virtue is in themselves. No midwife, I understand, would go about her business without a plentiful supply of garlic. It is well that the room should be redolent of it, and a few cloves must be fastened about the baby's neck either at birth or immediately after the baptism. Blue beads are in general use for women, children, and animals. If men wear them, they are usually concealed from view. But mothers value them above all, because in virtue of their colour—γαλάζιος is modern Greek for 'blue'—they ensure an abundant supply of milk (γάλα) unaffected by the evil eye or any other sinister potency. Salt and charcoal are most conveniently carried in little bags with a string to go round the neck. An effective charm consists of three grains of each material with an old coin. But many other things are also used; when I have been permitted to inspect the contents of such a bag, I have found strange assortments of things, pebbles, pomegranate-seeds, bits of soap, leaves of basil and other plants, often hard to recognize through age and dirt and grease. One scientifically-minded man recommended me sulphate of copper.

Special occasions also have special precautions proper to them. At a wedding, the time of all others when envious eyes are most likely to cause mischief, the bridegroom commonly carries a black-handled knife slipped inside his belt[1], and the bride has an open pair of scissors in her shoe or some convenient place, in order that any such evil influence may be 'cut off.' But some of these magical safeguards concern not only the evil eye, but ghostly perils in general, and will claim notice in other connexions.

If, however, through lack of precautions or in spite of them, a man suspects that he is being 'overlooked,' he must rely for protection on the resources with which nature has provided him.

[1] Cf. Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηνάων, vol. III. p. 41.

The simplest thing is to spit,—three times for choice, for that number has magical value,—but on oneself, not at the suspected foe. Theocritus was scrupulously correct, according to the modern view, in making his shepherd spit thrice on his own bosom. Another expedient, though no garlic be at hand to give effect to the words, is to ejaculate, *σκόρδο 'στὰ μάτια σου*, 'garlic in your eyes!' Or use may be made of an imprecation considered effective in many circumstances of danger, *νὰ φᾶς τὸ κεφάλι σου*, 'may you devour your own head!' Lastly there is the *φάσκελον*, a gesture of the hand,—first raised with the fist closed and then suddenly advanced either with all the fingers open but bent, or with the thumb and little finger alone extended,—which returns the evil upon the offender's own head with usury.

But, in spite of these manifold means of defence, the evil eye has its victims; some malady seizes upon a man, for which no other cause can be assigned; and the question of a cure arises. Here the Church comes to the rescue, with special forms of prayer, commonly known as *βασκανισμοί*, provided for the purpose. The person affected goes to the church, or, if the case be serious, the priest comes to his house, the prayers are recited, and the sufferer is fumigated with incense. Also if there happens to be a sacred spring or well, *ἅγιασμα* as it is called, in the precincts of any church near,—and there are a fair number of churches in Greece which derive both fame and emolument from the possession of healing and miracle-working waters[1],—the victim of the evil eye is well-advised to drink of them. There are some, however, who rate the powers of a witch more highly than those of a priest, and prefer her incantations to the prayers of the Church. She knows, or is ready to improvise, forms of exorcism (*ξόρκια, ξορκισμοί*) for all kinds of affliction. A typical example[2] begins, as do many of the incantations of witchcraft, with an invocation of Christ and the Virgin and the Trinity and the twelve Apostles; then comes a complaint against the grievous illness which needs curing; next imprecations upon the man or

[1] The Church of the Annunciation, for example, in Tenos, possesses an *ἅγιασμα* as well as its miraculous *icon*. This spring was in high repute before the *icon* was discovered, cf. Μαυρομαρᾶ, Ἱστ. τῆς Τήνου, p. 102 (a translation of Salonis, *Voyage à Tine* (Paris 1809)). The *icon* was discovered only just before the Greek War of Independence.

[2] Καμπούρογλου, Μνημεῖα τῆς Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηναίων, vol. III. p. 5.

woman responsible for causing it; and finally an adjuration of the evil eye to depart from the sufferer's 'head and heart and finger-nails and toe-nails and the cockles of the heart, and to begone to the hills and mountains[1]' and so forth; after all which the Lord's prayer or any religious formula may be repeated *ad libitum*. During the recitation of some such charm, the witch fumigates her patient either with incense, or,—what is more effectual where a guess can be made as to the identity of the envious enemy,—by burning something belonging to the latter, a piece of his clothing or even a handful of earth from his doorway[2]. Or again, if the patient is at a loss to conjecture who it is that has harmed him, recourse may be had to divination. A familiar method is to burn leaves or petals of certain plants,—basil and gillyflower being of special repute[3],—mentioning at the same time a number of names in succession. A loud pop or crackling denotes that the name of the offender has been reached, and the treatment can then proceed as described above.

No less widespread in Greece than the belief in the evil eye, and equally primitive in character, is the practice of magic. Few villages, I believe, even at the present day do not possess a wise woman (*μάγισσα*). Often indeed, owing to the spread of education and the desire to be thought 'European' and 'civilised,' the inhabitants will indignantly deny her existence, and affect to speak of witches as things of the past. But in times of illness or trouble they are apt to forget their pretensions of superiority, and do not hesitate to avail themselves of the lore inherited from their superstitious forefathers. For the most part women are the depositaries of these ancient secrets, and the knowledge of charms, incantations, and all the rites and formularies of witchcraft is handed down from mother to daughter. But men are not excluded from the profession. The functions of the priest, for example, are not clearly distinguished from those of the unconsecrated magician. At a baptism, which often takes place in the house where the child is born and not at the church, the

[1] The banishment of suffering etc. to the mountains is an idea to be met with in ancient Greek literature, cf. Orphic Hymn, no. 19, *ἀλλὰ, μάκαρ, θυμὸν βαρὺν ἔμβαλε κύμασι πόντου ἠδ' ὀρέων κορυφῇσι.*

[2] Cf. 'Ι. Σ. 'Αρχελάου, *ἡ Σινασός*, p. 87.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 88.

priest opens the service by exorcising all evil spirits and influences from the four corners of the room by swinging his censer, but the midwife, who usually knows something of magic, or one of the god-parents, accompanies him and makes assurance doubly sure by spitting in each suspected nook. Moreover if a priest lead a notoriously evil life or chance to be actually unfrocked, the devil invests him with a double portion of magical power, which on any serious occasion is sure to be in request. But, apart from the clergy who owe their powers to the use or abuse of their office, there are other men too here and there who deal in witchcraft. They are usually specialists in some one branch, and professors of the white art rather than of the black,—one versed in popular medicine and the incantations proper to it, another in undoing mischievous spells, another in laying the restless dead. The general practitioners, causing disease as often as curing it, binding with curses as readily as loosing from them, are for the most part women.

I shall not attempt to enumerate here all the petty uses of magic of which I have heard or read: indeed an exhaustive treatment of the subject, even for one who had devoted a lifetime to cultivating an intimacy with Greek witches, would be hardly possible; for their secrets are not lightly divulged, and new circumstances may at any time require the invention of new methods. I propose only to describe some of the best known and most widely spread practices, some beneficent, others mischievous. Most of them will be seen to be based on the primitive and worldwide principle of sympathetic magic,—the principle that a relation, analogy, or sympathy existing, or being once established, between two objects, that which the one does or suffers, will be done or suffered also by the other.

If it be desired to cause physical injury or death to an enemy, the simplest and surest method is to make an image of him in some malleable material,—wax, lead, or clay,—and, if opportunity offer, to knead into it or attach to it some trifle from the enemy's person. Three hairs from his head are a highly valuable acquisition, but parings of his nails or a few shreds of his clothing will serve: or again the image may be put in some place where his shadow will fall upon it as he passes. These refinements of the practice, however, are not indispensable;

the image by itself will suffice. This being made, the treatment of it varies according to the degree of suffering which it is desired to inflict.

Acute pain may be caused to the man by driving into his image pins or nails. This device is popularly known as *κάρφωμα*, 'pinning' or 'nailing,' and many variations of it are practised. One case recorded in some detail was that of a priest's wife who from her wedding-day onward was a prey to various pains and ills. The priest tried in vain to relieve them by prayer, and finally called in a witch to aid him. After performing certain occult rites of divination, she informed him that he must dig in the middle of his courtyard. There he found a tin, which on being opened revealed an assortment of pernicious charms,—one of his wife's bridal shoes with a large nail through it, a dried-up bit of soap (presumably from the bridal bath) stuck full of pins, a wisp of hair (probably some of the bride's combings) all in a tangle, and lastly a padlock. The nail and pins were at once pulled out and the hair carefully disentangled, with the result that the woman was freed from her pains and her complicated ailments. But the padlock could not be undone, and was thrown away into the sea, with the result that the woman remained childless. The bride had been 'nailed' (*καρφωμένη*) by a rival. In this case, it is true, no waxen or leaden image was used, but the principle is the same. The use of an image is only preferable as allowing the maker of it to select any part of the body which he wishes to torture.

Another method of dealing with the image is to melt or wear it away gradually; if it be of wax or lead, it may be seared with a red-hot poker, or placed bodily in the fire; if it be of clay, it may be scraped with a knife, or put into some stream which will gradually wash it away. Accordingly as it is thus wasted away, slowly or rapidly, so will the person whom it represents waste and die. This is in principle the same system as that adopted by Simaetha in the Idyll of Theocritus to win back the love of Delphis. 'Even as I melt this wax,' she cries, 'with God's help, so may the Myndian Delphis by love be straightway molten[1]'; and she too used in her magic rites a fringe from Delphis' cloak, to shred and to cast into the fierce flame[2]. Only,

[1] Theocr. *Id.* II. 28.

[2] *Ibid.* 53.

in her case, the incantation turned what might have been a death-spell into a love-charm.

Love and jealousy are still the passions which most frequently suggest the use of magic. Occult methods are necessary to the girl whose modesty prevents her from courting openly the man on whom her heart is set, and not less so to her who would punish the faithlessness of a former lover.

The following are some recorded recipes[1] for winning the love of an apathetic swain.

Obtain some milk from the breasts of a mother and daughter who are both nursing male infants at the same time, or, in default of that, from any two women both nursing first-born male infants; mix it with wheat-flour and leaven, and contrive that the man eat of it. Repeat therewith the following incantation: *ὅπως κλαῖνε καὶ λαχταρίζουν τώρα τὰ παιδία ποῦ τοὺς λείπει τὸ γάλα τους, ἔτσι νὰ λαχταρίσῃ καὶ ὁ τάδε γι̯ὰ τὴν τάδε*, 'As the infants now cry and throb with desire for the milk which fails them, so may N. throb with desire for M.'

Take a bat or three young swallows, and roast to cinders on a fire of sticks gathered by a witch at midnight where cross-roads meet: at the same time repeat the words, *ὅπως στρηφογυρίζει, τρέμει, καὶ λαχταρίζει ἡ νυχτερίδα, ἔτσι νὰ γυρίζῃ ὁ τάδε, νὰ τρέμῃ καὶ νὰ λαχταρίζῃ ἡ καρδι̯ά του γι̯ὰ τὴν τάδε*, 'As the bat writhes, quivers, and throbs, so may N. turn, and his heart quiver and throb with desire for M.' The ashes of the bat are then to be put into the man's drink.

Take a bat and bury it at cross-roads; burn incense over it for forty days at midnight; dig it up and grind its spine to powder. Put the dust in the man's drink as before.

Such are some of the magic means of winning love; and the rites, while involving as much cruelty to the bat as was suffered by the bird of witchcraft, the *ἴυγξ*, in the ancient counterpart of these practices, are at any rate, save for the ashes in the man's liquor, innocuous to him. But the weapon of witchcraft wherewith a jealous woman takes vengeance upon a man who has forsaken her or who has never returned her affection and takes to himself another for his bride, is truly diabolical. This

[1] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθ.* vol. III. p. 21.

is known as the spell of 'binding' (*δέσιμον* or *ἀμπόδεμα*[1]). Its purpose is to fetter the virility of the husband and so to prevent the consummation of the marriage. The rite itself is simple. Either the jealous girl herself or a witch employed by her attends the wedding, taking with her a piece of thread or string in which three loops have been loosely made. During the reading of the gospel or the pronouncement of the blessing, she pulls the ends of the string, forming thereby three knots in it, and at the same time mutters the brief incantation, *δένω τὸν τάδε καὶ τὴν τάδε, καὶ τὸ διάβολο 'στὴ μέση*, 'I bind N. and M. and the Devil betwixt them.' The thread is subsequently buried or hidden, and unless it can be found and either be burnt or have the knots untied, there is small hope for the man to recover from his impotence. There is no doubt, I think, that the extreme fear in which this spell is held has in some cases so worked upon the bridegroom's nerves as to render the 'binding' actually effective, just as extreme faith in miraculous *icons* occasionally effects cures of nervous maladies[2]. Sonnini de Magnoncourt vouches for a case, known to him personally, in which the effect of this terror continued for several months, until finally the marriage was dissolved on the ground of non-consummation, and the man afterwards married another wife and regained his energy[3]. I myself have more than once been told of similar cases, in which however divorce was not sought (it is extremely rare in Greece) but the spell was broken by the finding of the thread or by countervailing operations of magic. In Aetolia, where this superstition is specially rife, I knew of a priest, a son of Belial by all accounts, who made a speciality of loosing these binding-spells. By his direction the afflicted man and his wife would go at sunset to a lonely chapel on a mountain-side, taking with them food and a liberal supply of wine, with which to regale themselves and the priest till midnight. At that hour they undressed and stood before the priest, who pronounced over them some form of exorcism and benediction, —my informant could not give me the words. They then retired to rest on some bedding provided by the priest on the chapel-floor,

[1] This is probably the modern form of *ἐμπόδευμα*, 'entanglement.' The change of initial *ε* to *α* is not rare in dialect, cf. *ἄρμος* for *ἔρμος* (=*ἔρημος*) 'miserable'; and *υ*, with sound of English *v*, is regularly lost before *μ*.

[2] See below, pp. 60 ff.

[3] *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie*, II. 140.

while he recited more prayers and swung his censer over them. I was assured that more than one couple in the small town where I was staying confessed to having obtained release from the spell by a night thus spent and with the extreme simplicity of the peasants of that district thought no shame to confess it. And this is the more easily intelligible, because, as we shall see later[1], the practice of *ἐγκοίμησις*, sleeping in some holy place with a view to being cured of any ailment, is as familiar to Christians of to-day as it was to their pagan ancestors.

But pure magic too, no less than these quasi-Christian methods, may effect the loosing of the bond, even without the discovery of the knotted thread which is the source of the mischief. In a recent case on record, a witch, having been consulted by a couple thus distressed, took them to the sea-shore, bade them undress, bound them together with a vine-shoot, and caused them to stand embracing one another in the water until forty waves had beaten upon them[2]. On the significance of the details of this charm no comment is made by the recorder of it; but they deserve, I think, some notice. The vine-shoot, like the olive-shoot, is a known instrument of purification, and is sometimes laid on the bier beside the dead during the lying-in-state (*πρόθεσις*). Salt is likewise possessed of magical powers to avert all evil influences,—we have noticed the use of it in amulets to protect from the evil eye,—and the sea is therefore more efficacious than a river for mystic purposes. Forty is the number of purification; the churching of women takes place on the fortieth day from the birth, whence the Greek word for to 'church' is *σαραντίζω*,—from *σαράντα*, 'forty.' Lastly the beating of the waves seems intended to drive out by physical compulsion the devil or any power of evil by which husband and wife are kept apart.

In view of this danger it is natural that ample precautions should be taken at every wedding. During the dressing of the bride or the bridegroom, it is customary to throw a handful of salt into a vessel of water, saying, *ὅπως λυώνει τὸ ἁλάτι, ἔτσι νὰ λυώσουν οἱ ὀχτροί* (*ἐχθροί*), 'As the salt dissolves, so may all enemies dissolve.' The black-handled knife worn by the bridegroom in his belt, and the pair of scissors put in the bride's shoe

[1] Below, pp. 61 ff.

[2] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, vol. III. p. 60.

or sometimes attached to her girdle, both of which have been noticed as safeguards against the evil eye, serve also to 'cut' this magic bond of impotence. Sometimes too a pair of scissors and a piece of fisherman's net are put in the bridal bed. In Acarnania and Aetolia, and it may be elsewhere, a still more primitive custom prevails; both bride and bridegroom wear an old piece of fishing-net,—in which therefore resides the virtue of salt water,—round the loins next to the body; and from these bits of netting are afterwards made amulets to be worn by any children of the marriage. Such customs are likely long to continue among the simpler folk of modern Greece, who frankly and innocently wish the bride at her wedding reception 'seven sons and one daughter.'

But it is not only for ailments induced by malicious magic that magical means of cure or aversion are used. The whole of popular medicine is based upon the knowledge of charms and incantations. Many simples and drugs are of course known and employed; but it is still generally believed, as it was in old time, that 'there would be no good in the herb without the incantation[1].' For the most ordinary diseases are credited to supernatural causes, and there is no ill to which flesh is heir,—from a headache to the plague,—without some demon responsible for it. A nightmare and the sense of physical oppression which often accompanies it are not traced to so vulgar a cause as a heavy supper, but are dignified as the work of a malicious being named Βραχνᾶς[2], who in the dead of night delights to seat himself on the chest of some sleeper, and by his weight produces an unpleasant feeling of congestion. Material for a similar personification has been found also in the more terrible pestilences by which Greece has from time to time been visited. It is still believed among the poorest folk of Athens that in a cleft on the

[1] Plato, *Charm.* § 8 (p. 155).

[2] The name is probably derived from the ancient *βράγχος*, with metathesis of the nasal sound. If *βράγχος* means congestion of the throat, the modern formation in *-ᾶς* would mean 'one who causes congestion,'—apparently of other parts besides the throat. The by-forms Βαραχνᾶς and Βαρυχνᾶς seem to have been influenced by a desire to connect the name with *βαρύς*, 'heavy.' Under the ancient name of this demon, 'Ephialtes,' Suidas gives also a popular name of his day, Βαβουτσικάριος, a word borrowed from late Latin and apparently connected with *babulus* (*baburrus*, *baburcus*, *babuztus*) 'foolish,' 'mad.' *Babutsicarius* should then be the sender of foolish or mad dreams. Suidas however may be in error; see below p. 217.

Hill of the Nymphs, undisturbed even by the modern observatory on its summit, there lives a gruesome sisterhood, a trinity of she-devils, Χολέρα, Βλογιά, and Πανοῦκλα,—Cholera, Smallpox, and Plague.

Granted then that illness in general is the malicious work of supernatural beings, common reason recommends the employment of supernatural means to defeat and expel them. Forms of exorcism have in past times been provided by the Church and are still in vogue; but here, as in other matters, the functions of the priest are shared with the witch, and an old woman versed in the traditional lore of popular medicine is as competent as any bishop to cast out the devils of sickness. Nor do the popular incantations differ much in substance from the ecclesiastical. The witch knows better than to try to cast out devils in the Devil's name, and her exorcisms contain invocations of God and the saints of the same character as those sanctioned by the Church; only in her accompanying rites and gestures there is a picturesque variety which is lacking in the swinging of the priest's censer.

The details of the rites and the full forms of incantation are in general extremely difficult to obtain. The witches themselves are always reticent on such points, and I have known one plead, by way of excuse for her apparent discourtesy in withholding information, that the virtue of magic was diminished in proportion as the knowledge of it was disseminated. One cure, however, —a cure for headache—will sufficiently illustrate the principle on which the healing art among the common-folk generally proceeds. This cure is based upon the assumption that the tense and bruised feeling of a bad headache is due to the presence of some demon within the skull, and that the room which he occupies must have been provided by distention of the head,—which will therefore measure more in circumference while it aches than when the demon has been exorcised. This is demonstrated in the course of the cure. The witch takes a handkerchief and measures with it the patient's head. Doubling back the six or eight inches of the handkerchief that remain over, she puts in the fold three cloves of garlic, three grains of salt, or some other article of magical virtue, and ties a knot. Then waving the handkerchief about the patient's head, she recites her form of exorcism,—but usually

in a tone so low and mumbling that the bystanders cannot catch the words. The exorcism being finished, she again measures the head, and this time the knot, which marks the previous measurement, is found to overlap, by two or three inches it may be, the other end of the kerchief,—a sure sign that the intruding demon has been expelled and that the head having returned to its natural dimensions will no longer ache[1]. The exact words of the incantation which should accompany this rite I could not obtain; but I make little doubt that in substance they would differ little from a Macedonian formula recently published:—

'For megrim and headache:

'Write on a piece of paper:—God of Abraham, God of Isaac, God of Jacob, loose the demon of the megrim from the head of Thy servant. I charge thee, unclean spirit which ever sittest in the head of man, take thy pain and depart from the head: from half-head, membrane, and vertebra, from the servant of God, So-and-so. Stand we fairly, stand we with fear of God. Amen[2].'

In this instance we have the formula but not, it seems, the rite which should accompany it; for the mere act of committing the words to paper is hardly likely to be deemed sufficient. Probably the paper would be laid under the pillow at night, or, as I have known in other cases, would be burnt, and its ashes taken as a sedative powder.

The various charms which we have so far considered are directed towards the hurt or the healing of man: but external nature is also responsive to magic spells. It is rumoured that there are still witches who have power to draw down the moon from the heavens by incantation; but a more useful ceremony, designed to draw down the clouds upon a parched land, may still be actually witnessed. The most recent case known to me was in the April of 1899, when the rite was carried out some few days, unfortunately, after I had left the district by the people of Larissa. The custom is known all over the north of Greece—in Epirus[3], Thessaly, and Macedonia,—and also it is said among some of the Turks, Wallachs, and Servians; to the south of those regions and in the islands of the Aegean I heard nothing of it.

[1] I learnt the details of this cure in Aetolia; a different version of it is recorded from Cimolos by Theodore Bent, *The Cyclades*, pp. 51 ff.

[2] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 363.

[3] Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά, pp. 172 ff.

A boy (or sometimes, it is said, a girl[1]) is stripped naked and then dressed up in wreaths and festoons of leafage, grass, and flowers, and, escorted by a troop of children of his own age, goes the round of the neighbourhood. He is known as the *περπερία*, and his companions sing as they go,

> Perpería goes his way
> And to God above doth pray,
> Rain, O God, a gentle rain,
> Shed, O God, a gentle shower,
> That the fields may give their grain,
> And the vines may come to flower,

and so forth in such simple strain[2]. At each doorway and more particularly at every spring and well, which it is the special duty of the Perpería to visit, anyone who will may empty a vessel of water over the boy, to whom some compensation for his drenching is usually made in the form of sweetmeats or coppers.

The word *περπερία* has been the subject of considerable discussion. By-forms *περπερίτσα*, *περπεροῦνα*, and *παπαπαροῦνα* also occur. The first two are of the nature of diminutives; the last-named is a corrupt form used only, so far as I know, in one district of Epirus, and means a 'garden-poppy.' The perversion of the word has in this district (Zagorion) affected the rite itself; for it is considered necessary for this flower to be used largely in dressing up the chief actor in the ceremony[3]. But the most general, and, as I think, most correct form is *περπερία* (or *περπερεία*). With the ancient word *περπερεία*, derived from the Latin *perperus* and used in the sense of 'boasting' or 'ostentation,' it can, I feel, have no connexion; and I suggest that it stands for *περιπορεία*, with the same abbreviation as in *περπατῶ* for *περιπατῶ*, 'walk,' and subsequent assimilation of the first two syllables. If my conjecture is right, the word originally meant nothing more than a 'procession round' the village; next it became confined in usage to a procession for the particular purpose of procuring rain; and finally, the words *πορεία*[4] and *πορεύομαι* having been lost from popular

[1] Passow (*Popularia Carmina*, Index, s.v. *περπερία*) speaks of a girl only. He was perhaps influenced by the feminine form of the word.

[2] Many versions of the song have been collected, but with little variation in substance. Passow gives three versions, *Pop. Carm.* nos. 311—313.

[3] Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά, pp. 172 ff.

[4] *πορεία* belongs to the dialect of the Tsakonians as spoken at Leonidi, but is otherwise obsolete.

speech, it was taken to be the name of the boy who plays the uncomfortable part of vegetation craving water. And indeed it would seem likely that the song which forms part of the ceremony was actually first composed at a time when περπερία was still understood in the sense of 'procession': for in every recorded version known to me it would be still possible to interpret the word in this meaning without detriment to the context.

The rite itself as an example of sympathetic magic requires no commentary: a simpler application of the principle that like produces like could not be found.

Other examples of primitive customs and beliefs still prevalent in Greece might easily be amassed: but I have preferred to select these few for detailed treatment rather than to glance over a larger number, in order that they may the more clearly be seen to belong to certain types of superstition found the whole world over and therefore presumably dating from prehistoric ages: for if the population of Greece has proved a good vehicle for the transmission of superstitions so primaeval, it will surely follow that there is nothing extravagant in hoping to learn also from their traditions something of the religion of historic Hellas.

## § 3. The survival of Hellenic Tradition.

There may however be some who, while admitting that mere lapse of time need not have extinguished ancient Hellenic ideas, will be disposed to question the likelihood, even the possibility, of their transmission on racial grounds. The belief in the evil eye and the practice of sympathetic magic were once, they may say, the common property of the whole uncivilised world; and though the inhabitants of modern Greece have inherited these old superstitions and usages, there is nothing to show from what ancestry they have received the inheritance. The population, it may be urged, has changed; the Greeks of to-day are not Hellenes; their blood has been contaminated by foreign admixture, and with this admixture may have come external, non-Hellenic traditions; has not Fallmerayer stoutly maintained that the modern inhabitants of Greece have practically no claim to the name of Hellenes, but come of a stock Slavonic in the main, though cross-bred with the offscourings of many peoples?

The historical facts from which Fallmerayer argued are not to be slighted. It is well established[1] that, from the middle of the sixth century onwards, successive hordes of Slavonic invaders swept over Greece, driving such of the native population as escaped destruction into the more mountainous or remote districts; that in the middle of the eighth century, when the numbers of the Greek population had been further reduced by the great pestilence of 746, 'the whole country,' to use the exact phrase of Constantine Porphyrogenitus[2], 'became Slavonic and was occupied by foreigners'; that the Slavonic supremacy lasted at least until the end of the tenth century; that thereafter a gradual fusion of the remnants of the Greek population with their conquerors began, but proceeded so slowly that at the beginning of the thirteenth century the 'Franks,' as the warriors of Western Christendom were popularly called, found Slavonic tribes in Elis and Laconia quite detached from the rest of the population, acknowledging indeed the supremacy of the Byzantine government, but still employing their own language and their own laws; and finally that the amalgamation of the two races was not complete even by the middle of the fifteenth century, for the Turks at their conquest of Greece found several tribes of the Peloponnese, especially in the neighbourhood of Mount Taygetus, still speaking a Slavonic tongue.

If then, as is now generally admitted, Fallmerayer's conclusions were somewhat exaggerated, it remains none the less an historical fact that there is a very large admixture of Slavonic blood in the veins of the present inhabitants of Greece. The truth of this is moreover enforced by the physical characteristics of the people as a whole. Travellers conversant alike with Slavs and with modern Greeks have affirmed to me their impression that there is a close physical resemblance between the two races; and while I have not the experience of Slavonic races which would permit me to judge of this resemblance for myself, it certainly offers the best explanation of my own observations with regard to the variations of physical type in different parts of the Greek world. In the islands of the Aegean and in the promontory of Maina, to which the Slavs never penetrated, the ancient Hellenic types are far commoner than in the rest of the Peloponnese or in Northern

[1] For authorities etc. see Finlay, *Hist. of Greece*, vol. IV. pp. 11 ff. (cap. 1, § 3).
[2] *De Themat.* II. 25. Finlay, *op. cit.* IV. 17.

Greece. Not a little of the charm of Tenos or Myconos or Scyros lies in the fact that the grand and impassive beauty of the earlier Greek sculpture may still be seen in the living figures and faces of men and women: and if anyone would see in the flesh the burly, black-bearded type idealised in a Heracles, he need but go to the south of the Peloponnese, and among the Maniotes he will soon be satisfied: for there he will find not merely an occasional example, as of reversion to an ancestral type, but a whole tribe of swarthy, stalwart warriors, whose aspect seems to justify their claim that in proud, though poverty-stricken, isolation they have kept their native peninsula free from alien aggression, and the old Laconian blood still pure in their veins. The ordinary Greek of the mainland, on the other hand, is usually of a mongrel and unattractive appearance; and in view of the marked difference of the type in regions untouched by the Slavs, I cannot but impute his lack of beauty to his largely Slavonic ancestry.

Yet even in the centre of the Peloponnese where the Slavonic influence has probably been strongest, the pure Greek type is not wholly extinct. I remember a young man who acted as ostler and waiter and in all other capacities at a small *khan* on the road from Tripolitza to Sparta, who would not have been despised as a model by Praxiteles; and elsewhere too, now and again, I have seen statuesque forms and classic features, less perfect indeed than his, but yet proclaiming beyond question an Hellenic lineage; so that I should hesitate to say that in any part of Greece the population is as purely Slavonic as in Maina or many of the islands it is purely Greek.

But, as I think, the exact proportion of Slavonic and of Hellenic blood in the veins of the modern Greeks is not a matter of supreme importance. Even if their outward appearance were universally and completely Slavonic, I would still maintain that they deserve the name of Greeks. Though their lineage were wholly Slavonic, their nationality, I claim, would still be Hellenic. For the nationality of a people, like the personality of an individual, is something which eludes definition but which embraces the mental and the moral as well as the physical. A man's personality is not to be determined by knowledge of his family and his physiognomy alone; and similarly racial descent and physical type are not the sole indices of nationality. Even if a

purely Slavonic ancestry had dowered the inhabitants of Greece with a purely Slavonic appearance, yet, if their thoughts and speech and acts were, as they are, Greek, I would still venture to call them Greek in nationality. *Ce n'est que la peau dont l'Ethiope ne change pas.*

But the people of modern Greece do not actually present so extreme a case of acquired nationality. They are partly Greek in race: and if it should appear that they are wholly Greek in nationality, the explanation must simply be that the character, no less than the language, of their Hellenic ancestors was superior in vitality to that of the Slavs who intermarried with them, and alone has been transmitted to the modern Greek people.

What, then, is the national character at the present day?

The first feature of it which casual conversation with any Greek will soon bring into view is that narrow patriotism which was so remarkable a trait in the Greeks of old time. If he be asked what is his native land (*πατρίδα*), his answer will be, not Greece nor any of the larger divisions of it, but the particular town or hamlet in which he happened to be born: and if in later life he change his place of abode, though he live in his new home ten or twenty years, he will regard himself and be regarded by the native-born inhabitants as a foreigner (*ξένος*). Or again if a man obtain work for a short time in another part of the country, or if a girl marry an inhabitant of a village half a dozen miles from her own, the departure is mourned with some of those plaintive songs of exile in which the popular muse delights. Nor are there lacking historical cases in which this narrow love of country has produced something more than fond lamentations; the boast of the Maniotes that they have never acknowledged alien masters is in the main a true boast, and it was pure patriotism which nerved them in their long struggle with the Turks for the possession of their rugged, barren, storm-lashed home. It was patriotism too, narrow and proud, that both sustained the heroic outlaws of Souli in their defiance of Ottoman armies, and also,—because they disdained alliance with their Greek neighbours,—contributed to their final downfall.

But so tenacious and indomitable a courage is in modern, as it was in ancient, Greece the exception rather than the rule. The men of Maina and of Souli are comparable to the Spartans:

but in no period of Greek history has steadfast bravery been commonly displayed. Yet, in spite of the humiliating experiences of the late Graeco-Turkish war, the Greek people should not be judged devoid of courage. But theirs is a courage which comes of impulse rather than of self-command; a courage which might prompt a charge as brilliant as that of Marathon, but could not cheerfully face the hardships of a campaign; a courage which might turn a slight success into a victory, but could not save a retreat from becoming a rout.

It must be acknowledged also that the rank and file are in general more admirable than their officers. The bravery of the men, impulsive and short-lived though it be, is inspired by a real devotion of themselves to a cause; whereas among the officers self-seeking and even self-saving are conspicuous faults. Even the really courageous leaders seldom have a single eye to the success of their arms. Their plans are marred by petty jealousies. The same rivalries for the supreme command which embarrassed the Greeks of old in defending their liberty against Persia, were repeated in the struggles of the last century to throw off the Turkish yoke. And if in both cases the Greeks were successful, in neither was victory due to the unity and harmony of their leaders, but rather to that passionate hatred of the barbarians which stirred the people as a whole.

Indeed, not only in war but in all conditions of life, any personal eminence or distinction has been apt to turn the head of a Greek. 'The abundant enjoyment of power or wealth,' said the ancients not without knowledge of the national character, 'begets lawlessness and arrogance'; and in humbler phrase the modern proverb sums up the same qualities of the race,—*καλὸς δοῦλος, κακὸς ἀφέντης*, 'a good servant and a bad master.' In all periods of Greek history there have been few men who have attained to power without abusing it. The honour of being returned to the Greek Parliament upsets the mental balance of a large number of deputies. Without any more intimate knowledge of politics than can be obtained from second-rate newspapers, they believe themselves called and qualified to lead each his own party, with the result—so it is commonly said—that no government since the first institution of parliament has ever had an assured majority in the House, and on an average there have been more than one dissolution a year. The modern parliament is as un-

stable an institution as the ancient ecclesia of Athens when there was no longer a Pericles to control it, and its demagogues are as numerous.

Even the petty eminence of a village schoolmaster proves to be too giddy a pinnacle for many. Such an one thinks it necessary to support his position—which owing to the Greek love of education is more highly respected perhaps than in other countries—by a pretence of universal knowledge and a pedantry as lamentable as it is ludicrous. I remember a gentleman who boasted the title of Professor of Ancient History in the *gymnasium* or secondary school of a certain town, who called to me one day as I was passing a *café* where he and some of his friends were sitting, and said that they were having a pleasant little discussion about the first Triumvirate, and had recalled the names of Cicero and Caesar, but could not at the moment remember the third party. Could I help them? I hesitated a moment, and then resolved to risk it and suggest, what was at least alliterative if not accurate, the name of Cato. 'Of course,' he answered, 'how these things do slip one's memory sometimes!' Yet this Professor posed as an authority on many subjects outside his own province of learning, and frequently when I met him would insist on talking dog-Latin with an Italian pronunciation, a medium in which I found it difficult to converse.

In this readiness to discourse on any and every subject and to display attainments in and out of season, he and the class of which he is typical are the living images of the less respectable of the ancient Sophists. And in pedantry of language too they fairly rival their famous prototypes. The movement in favour of an artificial revival of ancient Greek has already been of long duration, and has had a detrimental effect upon the modern language. The vulgar tongue has a melodious charm, while many classical words, in the modern pronunciation, are extremely harsh and uncouth. The object of the movement is to secure an uniform 'pure' speech, as they call it, approximate to that of Plato or of Xenophon; and the method adopted is to mix up Homeric and other words of antiquarian celebrity with literal renderings of modern French idioms, inserting datives, infinitives, and other obsolete forms at discretion. To aid in this movement is the task and the delight of the schoolmasters: and such is their devotion to this linguistic sophistry, that they are not dismayed

even by the ambiguity arising from the use of ancient forms indistinguishable in modern speech. The two old words ἡμέτερος and ὑμέτερος have now no difference in sound: yet the schoolmaster uses them and inculcates the use of them, with the lamentable result that the children are not taught to distinguish *meum* and *tuum* even in speech.

And here again the character of the modern Greek reflects that of his ancestors. Honesty and truthfulness are not the national virtues. To lie, or even to steal, is accounted morally venial and intellectually admirable. It is a proof of superior mother-wit, than which no quality is more valued in the business of everyday life. Almost the only things in Greece which have fixed prices are tobacco, newspapers, and railway-tickets. The hire of a mule, the cost of a bunch of grapes, the price of meat, the remuneration for a vote at the elections,—such matters as these are the subject of long and vivacious bargaining, and if the money does not change hands on the spot, the bargain may be smilingly repudiated and an attempt made, on any pretext which suggests itself, to extort more. Yet there is a certain charm in all this; for, if a man get his own price, it is not so much the amount of his profit which pleases him as his success in winning it; and if he fail, he takes a smaller sum with perfect good humour and increased respect for the man who has outwitted him. Anyone may be honest; but to be ἔξυπνος, as they say, shrewd, wide-awake,—this is Greek and admirable. The contrast of an Aristides with a Themistocles is the natural expression of Greek thought. Moral uprightness and mental brilliance are not to be expected of one and the same man; and for the most part the Greeks now as in old time praise others for their justice and pride themselves on their cunning. The acme of cleverness is touched by him who can both profit by dishonesty and maintain a reputation for sincerity.

But, while truthfulness and fair dealing are certainly rare, there is one relation in which the most scrupulous fidelity is unfailingly shown. The obligations of hospitality are everywhere sacred. The security and the comfort of the guest are not in name only but in actual fact the first consideration of his host. However unscrupulous a Greek may be in his ordinary dealings, he never, I believe, harbours for one moment the idea of making

profit out of the stranger who seeks the shelter of his roof. For hospitality in Greece, it must be remembered, means not the entertainment of friends and acquaintances who are welcome for their own sake or from whom a return in kind may be expected, but real *φιλοξενία*, a generous and friendly welcome to a stranger unknown yesterday and vanished again to-morrow. To each unbidden chance-comer the door is always open. For lodging he may chance to have an incense-reeking room where the family *icons* hang, or a corner of a cottage-floor barricaded against the poultry and other inmates; for food, hot viands rich in circumambient oil, or three-month-old rye-bread softened in a cup of water; but among rich and poor alike he is certain of the best which there is to give. Even where there are inns available, the stranger will constantly find that the first native of the place to whom he puts the Aristophanic enquiry *ὅπου κόρεις ὀλίγιστοι*[1]—which inn is of least entomological interest—will constitute himself not guide but host and will place the resources of his own house freely at the service of the chance-found visitor.

The reception accorded by Eumaeus to Odysseus, in its revelation of human—and also of canine—character, differs in no respect from that which may await any traveller at the present day. As Odysseus approached the swineherd's hut, 'suddenly the yelping dogs espied him, and with loud barking rushed upon him, but Odysseus guilefully sat down and let fall his staff from his hand[2].' Such is the opening of the scene; and many, I suppose, must have wondered, as they read it, wherein consisted Odysseus' guilefulness. A shepherd of Northern Arcadia resolved me that riddle. I had been attacked on a mountain-path by two or three of his dogs,—'like unto wild beasts[3],' as Homer has it,—and the combat may have lasted some few minutes when the shepherd thought fit to intervene. Sheep-dogs are of course valued in proportion to their ferocity towards any person or animal approaching the flock, and a taste of blood now and again is said to keep them on their mettle. Fortunately matters had not reached that point; but none the less I suggested to the man that he might have bestirred himself sooner. 'Oh,' he replied, 'if you are really in difficulties, you should sit down'; and when

[1] Arist. *Frogs*, 114. [2] Hom. *Od.* XIV. 29—31. [3] *Ib.* 21.

I showed some surprise, he explained that anyone who is attacked by sheepdogs has only to sit down and let go his walking-stick or gun or other offensive weapon, and the dogs, understanding that a truce has been called, will sit down round him and maintain, so to speak, a peaceful blockade[1]. On subsequent occasions I tested the shepherd's counsel, beginning prudently with one dog only and, as I gained assurance, raising the number: it is uncomfortable[2] to remain sitting with a bloodthirsty Molossian hound at one's back, ready to resume hostilities if any suspicious movement is made; but I must own that, in my own fairly wide experience, Greek dogs, as they are *sans peur* in combat, are also *sans reproche* in observing a truce. The traveller may fare worse than by following the example of guileful Odysseus.

But if the scene of the encounter be not a mountain-path but the approach to some cottage, the dogs' master will, like Eumaeus, hasten to intervene, 'chiding them and driving them this way and that with a shower of stones[3],'—for the Greek dog does not heed mere words,—and again like Eumaeus will assure his visitor that he himself would have been 'covered with shame[4]' if the dogs had done his guest any hurt. Then he will conduct his guest into his cottage and bid him take his fill of bread and wine before he tells whence he is come and how he has fared[5]: for Greek hospitality spares the guest the fatigue of talking until he is refreshed. The visitor therefore sits at his ease, silent and patient, while his host catches and kills such beast or fowl as he may possess, cuts up the flesh in small pieces, threads these on a spit, and holds them over the embers of his fire till they are ready to serve up[6]: similarly, in Homeric fashion, he mixes wine and water[7]; and then, all the preparations being now complete, he urges his guest to the meal[8].

Thus the hospitality of to-day, in its details no less than in its spirit, recalls the hospitality of the Homeric age. The

[1] I am indebted to Mr L. Whibley for pointing out to me two records of this fact by English travellers of last century, W. Mure (*Journal of a Tour in Greece*, 1842, vol. I. p. 99), and W. G. Clark (*Peloponnesus*, 1858, p. 237).

[2] Perhaps this is the ἀεικέλιον πάθος (*Od.* 14. 32) which Odysseus would have endured for some time but for the intervention of Eumaeus. Otherwise the line must have been inserted by someone who did not appreciate the guile of Odysseus.

[3] ll. 35—6. [4] l. 38. [5] ll. 45—7.

[6] ll. 72—7. [7] l. 78. [8] ll. 79—80.

supreme virtue of the ancient Greek remains the supreme virtue of the modern, and a familiarity with the manners of the present day alone might suffice to explain why Paris who stole another man's wife was execrable but Admetus who let his own wife die for him could yet win admiration. The one broke the laws of hospitality; the other, by hiding his loss and entertaining his guest, upheld them.

A comparative estimate, such as I have essayed, of the characters of Greeks of old and Greeks of to-day is perhaps evidence of a somewhat intangible nature to those who are not personally intimate with the people: but no foreigner, even though he were totally ignorant of the modern language, could chance upon one of the many festivals of the country without remarking that there, in humbler form, are re-enacted many of the scenes of ancient days. The *πανηγύρια*, as they call these festivals,—diminutives, both in name and in form, of the ancient *πανηγύρεις*,—present the same medley of religion, art, trading, athletics, and amusement which constituted the Olympian games. The occasion is most commonly some saint's-day, and a church or a sacred spring (*ἅγιασμα*) the centre of the gathering. Art is represented by the contests of local poets or wits in improvising topical and other verses, and occasionally there is present one of the old-fashioned rhapsodes, whose number is fast diminishing, to recite to the accompaniment of a stringed instrument still called the *κιθάρα*[1] the glorious feats of some patriot-outlaw (*κλέφτης*) in defiance of the Turks. Then there are the pedlars and hucksters strolling to and fro or seated at their stalls, and ever crying their wares—fruit, sausages, confectionery of strange hues and stranger taste, beads, knives, cheap *icons* ranging in subject from likenesses of patron-saints to gaudy views of hell, and all manner of tin-foil trinkets representing ships, cattle, and parts of the human body for dedication in the church. Then in some open space there will be a gathering of young men, running, wrestling, hurling the stone; yonder others, and with them the girls, indulge in the favourite recreation of Greece, those graceful dances, of which the best-known, the *συρτός*[2],

[1] In some islands the old word *φόρμιγγα* also is still used.

[2] *C.I.G.* vol. I. p. 790 (No. 1625, l. 47) *τὰς δὲ πατρίους πομπὰς μεγάλας καὶ τὴν τῶν συρτῶν ὄρχησιν θεοσεβῶς ἐπετέλεσεν* (from Carditsa, anc. Acraephia, in Boeotia).

and probably others too, are a legacy from dancers of old time. It is impossible to be a spectator of such scenes without recognising that here, in embryonic form, are the festivals of which the famous gatherings of Olympia and Nemea, Delphi and the Isthmus, were the full development.

And it may well happen too that the observant onlooker will descry also the rudiments of ancient drama. Often, as is natural in so mountainous and rugged a country, the only level dancing-place which a village possesses is a stone-paved threshing-floor hewn out of the hill-side. Hither on any festal occasion, be it a saint's-day or one of the celebrations which naturally follow the ingathering of harvest or vintage, the dancers betake themselves. Here too a small booth or tent, still called *σκηνή*, is often rigged up, to which they can retire for rest or refreshment, while on the slopes above are ranged the spectators. The circular threshing-floor is the *orchestra*, the hill-side provides its tiers of seats, the dancers, who always sing while they dance, are the chorus; add only the village musician twanging a sorry lyre, and in the intervals of dancing an old-fashioned rhapsode reciting some story of bygone days, or, it may be, two village wits contending in improvised pleasantries, and the rudiments of ancient Tragedy or Comedy are complete.

Other illustrations might easily be amassed. On March 1st the boys of Greece still parade the village-streets with a painted wooden swallow set on a flower-decked pole, and sing substantially the same 'swallow-song' (*χελιδόνισμα*)[1] as was sung in old time in Rhodes[2]. On May 1st the girls make wreaths of flowers and corn which, like the ancient *εἰρεσιώνη*, must be left hanging over the door of the house till next year's wreaths take their place. The fisherman still ties his oar to a single thole with a piece of rope or a thong of leather, as did the mariners of Homer's age[3]. The farmer still drives his furrows with an Hesiodic plough.

Such are a few of the survivals which bear witness to the genuinely Hellenic nationality of the inhabitants of modern Greece: and last, but not least, there is the language, which, albeit no index of race, is most cogent evidence of tradition. To

[1] For examples see Passow, *Popul. Carm.* nos. 305—309.
[2] Athen. VIII. 360 c.
[3] Cf. Hom. *Od.* 4. 782.

the action of thought upon language there corresponds a certain reaction of language upon thought: it is impossible to speak a tongue which contains, let us say, the word *νεράϊδα* (modern Greek for a 'nymph') without possessing also an idea of the being whom that word denotes. Therefore even if the whole population of Greece were demonstrably of Slavonic race, the fact that it now speaks Greek would go far to support its claim to Hellenic nationality: for its adoption of the Greek language would imply its assimilation of Greek thought.

But, quite apart from the evidence of custom and language, the occasional perpetuation of the ancient Greek physical type and the general survival of the ancient Greek character plainly forbid so extreme a supposition as that of Fallmerayer: no traveller familiar with the modern Greek peasantry could entertain for a moment the idea that at any period the whole of Greece became Slavonicized, but, whatever might be the historical arguments for such a theory, would reject it, on the evidence of his own eyes, as ludicrously exaggerated. Fusion of race, no doubt, there has been; but in that fusion the Hellenic element must have been the most vital and persistent; for if the present population of Greece is of mixed descent, in its traditions at least it is almost purely Hellenic.

## § 4. The Survival of Pagan Tradition.

It appears then that notwithstanding the immigration of Slavonic hordes, and notwithstanding also, it may be added, the influences exercised in later periods by 'Franks,' Genoese, Venetians, and Turks, the traditions of the inhabitants of Greece still remain singularly pure; and their claim to Hellenic nationality is justified by their language, by their character, and by many secular aspects of their civilisation. But in the domain of religion it might reasonably be expected that a large change would have taken place. There is the obstinate fact, it may be thought, that the Greeks are now and have long been Christian. Did not the new religion dispossess and oust the ancient polytheism? Are we to look for pagan customs in the hallowed usages of the Greek Church? What can the simple Christian peasant of to-day, subject from his youth up to ecclesiastical influence, know

of the religion of his distant ancestors,—of those fundamental beliefs which guided their conduct towards gods and men in this life, and inspired their care for the dead?

On the conduct of man towards his fellow-men in this life the influence of Christianity appears to have been as great as that of paganism was small. Duty towards one's neighbour hardly came within the purview of Hellenic religion. If we look at the supreme acts of worship in ancient times, we cannot fail to be struck by the disunion of the religious and the ethical. A certain purity was no doubt required of those who attended the mysteries of Eleusis; but by that purity was meant physical cleanliness and, strangely enough, a pure use of the Greek language, just as much as any moral temperance or rectitude; and the required condition was largely attained by the use or avoidance of certain foods and by bathing in the sea. Their cleanliness in fact was of the same confused kind, half physical and half moral, as that which the inhabitants of Tenos were formerly wont, and perhaps still continue, to seek on S. John the Baptist's day (June 24) by leaping thrice through a bonfire and crying 'Here I leave my sins and my fleas[1]': and it was acquired by means equally material. There is nothing conspicuously ethical in such a purity as this.

If moreover, as has been well argued[2], a state of ecstasy was the highest manifestation of religious feeling, and this spiritual exaltation was the deliberate aim and end of Bacchic and other orgies, it must be frankly avowed that religion in its highest manifestations was not conducive to what we call morality. The means of inducing the ecstatic condition comprised drunkenness, inhalation of vapours, wild and licentious dancing. With physical surexcitation came, or was intended to come, a spiritual elevation such that the mind could visualise the object of its desire[3] and worship, and enjoy a sense of unity therewith. On the savagery and debauchery which accompanied these religious celebrations there is no need to enlarge. The *Bacchae* of Euripides, with all its passion for the beauty of holiness, is

[1] ἐδῶ ἀφίνω τὰ ἁμαρτήματά μου καὶ τοὺς ψύλλους μου, Δ. Μ. Μαυρομαρᾶς, Ἱστορία τῆς Τήνου, p. 87 (transl. of Dr M. Salonis, *Voyage à Tine* (Paris, 1809)).

[2] Rohde, *Psyche*, vol. II. pp. 9 ff.

[3] οἱ βακχευόμενοι καὶ κορυβαντιῶντες ἐνθουσιάζουσι μέχρις ἂν τὸ ποθούμενον ἴδωσιν, Philo, *de vita contempl.* 2. p. 473 M., cited by Rohde *l.c.*

a standing monument to the excesses of frenzy: and that these were no mere figment of the poet's imagination nor a transfiguration of rites long obsolete, is proved by a single sentence of a sober enough writer of later times, 'The things that take place at nocturnal celebrations, however licentious they may be, although known to the company at large, are to some extent condoned by them owing to the drunkenness[1].'

There were of course certain sects, such as the Orphic, who, in strong contrast with the ordinary religion, upheld definite ethical standards, preaching the necessity of purification from sin, and advocating moral and even ascetic rules of life. Yet, in spite of this, we find a certain amalgamation of Orphic and Bacchic mysteries. And why? Simply because both sects alike had a single end in view, a spiritual exaltation in which the soul might transcend the things of ordinary life, and see and commune with its gods. What did it matter if the means to that end differed? The one sect might reduce the passions of the body by rigid abstinence; the other might deaden them with a surfeit of their desire; but, whether by prostration or by surexcitation, the same religious end was sought and gained, and that end justified means which we count immoral.

In effect the morality of a man's life counted for nothing as compared with his religion. Participation in the mysteries ensured blessings here and hereafter which an evil life would not forfeit nor a good life, without initiation, earn. 'Thrice blessed they of men, who look upon these rites ere they go to Hades' home: for them alone is there true life there, and for the others nought but evil[2].' It was this that made Diogenes scoffingly ask, 'What, shall the thief Pataecion have a better lot than Epaminondas after death, because he has been initiated[3]?' Seemingly religion and morality were to the Greek mind divorced, or rather had never been wedded. Religion was concerned only with the intercourse of man and god: the moral character of the man himself and his relations with his fellows were outside the religious sphere.

Indeed it would have been hard for the ancients to regard morality as a religious obligation, when immorality was freely

[1] Artemidorus, *Oneirocr.* III. 61.
[2] Soph. *Fr.* 753.
[3] Diog. Laert. *Vita Diog.* 6. 39.

imputed to their gods. This was a real obstacle to the ethical improvement of the people at large, and was recognised as such by many thinkers. Pindar strove to expurgate mythological stories which brought discredit on the morals of Olympus. Plato would have banished the evil records of Homeric theology from his ideal state, and ridicules Musaeus for forming no more lofty conception of future bliss than 'eternal drunkenness.' Epicurus defended his own attitude towards the gods on the plea that there was 'no impiety in doing away with the popular gods, but rather in attaching to the gods the popular ideas of them[1].' In effect, in order to reconcile religion with the teaching of ethics, the would-be preacher of morality had either openly to discard a large amount of the popular theology or else to have recourse to adaptation and mystical interpretation of so artificial and arbitrary a kind that it could gain no hold upon the simple and spontaneous beliefs of the common-folk. Yet even among the ordinary men of those days there must have been some who, though they did not aspire to instruct their fellow-men, yet in hours of sober reason and cool judgement cannot have viewed unabashed the inconsistencies of a religion whose gods were stained with human vices. But such thoughts, we may suppose, were swept away, as men approached their sanctuaries and their mysteries, by a flood of religious fervour. Passion in such moments defeated reason. Emotion, susceptibility, imagination, impetuosity, powers of visualisation regarded among western nations as the perquisite of the inebriate, powers of ecstasy not easily distinguished from hysteria,—such were the mental conditions essential to the highest acts of worship; by these, and not by sober meditation, the soul attained to the closest communing and fullest union with that god whose glory for the nonce outshone all pale remembrance of mere moral rectitude and alone was able to evoke every supreme emotion of his worshipper.

If then morality was ever to be imposed and sanctioned by religion, a wholly new religion had to be found. This was the opportunity of Christianity. Paganism, in some of its most sacred rites, had availed itself even of immoral means to secure a religious end: Christianity gave to ethics a new and higher

[1] *apud* Diog. Laert. x. 123.

status, and was rather in danger of making religion wholly subservient to morality. That it was difficult to bring the first converts to the new point of view, is evident from the rebukes administered by S. Paul to the Corinthians, who seem not only to have indulged in many gross forms of vice in everyday life, but even to have made the most sacred of Christian services an occasion for gluttony and drunkenness[1].

In all then that concerns the ethical standards of the people, our study of modern Greece will contribute little to the understanding of ancient thought or conduct. Christianity has fenced men about with a rigid moral code, and has exerted itself to punish those who break bounds. Duty towards man is now recognised as the complement of duty towards God; and any one who by a notoriously evil life has outraged the moral laws of conduct, is liable to be deprived by excommunication of the established means of worship. The frailties of the Greek character remain indeed such as they always were: but now religion at least enjoins, if it cannot always enforce, the observance of a moral code which includes the eighth commandment, and Pataecion, though he go regularly to church, yet lacks something.

But while the Church had an open field in matters of morality and had no system of ethics based on Hellenic religion to combat in introducing her higher views of man's duty towards his fellow-men, in the province of pure religion and of all that concerns the relations of man with his God or gods she necessarily encountered competition and opposition. Primarily the contest between paganism and Christianity might have been expected to resolve itself into a struggle between polytheism and monotheism: but as a matter of fact that simple issue became considerably complicated.

The minds of the educated classes had become confused by the subtleties of the Gnostics, who sought to find, in some philosophical basis common to all religions, an intellectual justification for accepting Christianity without wholly discarding earlier religious convictions. This however was a matter of theology rather than of religion, appealing not to the heart but to the head: and so far as the common-folk were concerned we may safely say that such speculations were above their heads.

[1] 1 *Cor.* xi. 21.

Yet for them too the issue was confused in two ways. The first disturbing factor was the attitude adopted by each of the two parties, pagan and Christian, towards the object of the other's worship. The pagans—so catholic are the sympathies of polytheism—were ready enough to welcome Christ into the number of their gods. Tertullian tells us that the emperor Tiberius proposed the apotheosis of Christ[1]. Hadrian is said to have built temples in his honour[2]. Alexander Severus had in his private chapel statues of Christ, Abraham, and Orpheus[3]; and a similar association of Homer, Pythagoras, Christ, and S. Paul is noted by S. Augustine[4]. Since then there is no reason for supposing that the common-folk were more exclusive in their religious sympathies than the upper classes, it may safely be inferred that the average Pagan was willing to admit Christ to a place among the gods of Greece. The Christians on the other hand did not attack paganism by an utter denial of the existence of the old gods. They sought rather to ridicule and discredit them by pointing out the inconsistencies of pagan theology, and by ransacking mythology for every tale of the vices and misdoings of its deities. They even appealed to the testimony of Homer himself to show that the so-called gods (*θεοί*) of the Greek folk were mere demons (*δαίμονες*)[5],—for since Homer's day the latter word had lost caste. Such methods, had they been wholly successful, might have produced similar results to those which followed the conflict of two religions in the early ages of Greece. As the Titanic dynasty of gods had fallen before the Olympian Zeus, and in their defeat had come to be accounted cruel and malicious powers rightly ousted from heaven by a more just and gracious deity, so too in turn might the whole number of the pagan gods have been reduced to the status of devils to act as a foil to the goodness of the Christian God. But this did not happen. One reason perhaps was that Christianity came provided with its own devil or devils, and the pagans were naturally averse from placing the gods whom they had been wont to venerate in the same category with spirits so uncompromisingly evil. The main reason however must be found in the fact that the Church had nothing

[1] *Apolog.* cap. 5. [2] Lampridius (Hist. Aug.) *Alex.* cap. 29 f. [3] *Ibid.*
[4] *de Haeres.* cap. 8. For the references I am indebted to Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce*, vol. vi. p. 136.
[5] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* cap. iv. § 55 (p. 17 Sylb.).

to offer to the pagans in exchange for the countless gods of the old religion whom she was endeavouring to displace and to degrade. Indeed the real difficulty of the Christian Church was the tolerant spirit of the Greek people. They would not acknowledge that any feud existed. They were ready to worship the Christian God: but they must have felt that it was unreasonable of the Christian missionaries to ask them to give up all their old gods merely because a new god had been introduced. Even if their gods were all that the Christians represented them to be—cruel, licentious, unjust—that was no reason for neglecting them; rather it furnished a stronger motive for propitiating them and averting their wrath by prayer and sacrifice. Tolerant themselves, they must have resented a little the intolerance of the new religion.

Such being the attitude of the two parties, it may be doubted whether the Church would have made much headway in Greece, had it not been for a fresh development in her own conditions. And this development was the second disturbing factor in what should have been the simple struggle between monotheism and polytheism. Christianity, as understood by the masses, became polytheistic on its own account.

It is true that the authorities of the Greek Church have always taught that the angels and saints are not to be worshipped in the same sense as God. Ecclesiastical doctrine concedes to them no power to grant the petitions of men at their own will: they can act as intermediaries only between man and the Almighty; yet while they cannot in their own might fulfil the requests which they hear, their intervention as messengers to the throne of God is deemed to enhance the value of man's prayers and wellnigh to ensure their acceptance. But such a doctrine is naturally too subtle for the uninstructed common-folk: and just as Christ had been admitted to the ranks of the Greek gods, so were the saints, it would seem, accepted as lesser deities or perhaps heroes. Whatever their precise status may have been, they at any rate became objects of worship; and a religion which admits many objects of worship becomes necessarily a form of polytheism.

Now while the Church did not sanction this state of things by her doctrine, there can be no doubt that she condoned it by the use to which she put it. The attempt to crush paganism

had so far failed, and there was no longer any thought of a combat *à outrance* between the two religions. Violence was to give way to diplomacy; and the chief instrument of the Church's diplomacy was the worship of the saints. It became her hope to supplant paganism by substituting for the old gods Christian saints of similar names and functions; and the effects of this policy are everywhere in evidence in modern Greece.

Thus Dionysus was displaced by S. Dionysius, as a story still current in Greece testifies. 'Once upon a time S. Dionysius was on his way to Naxos: and as he went he espied a small plant which excited his wonder. He dug it up, and because the sun was hot sought wherewith to shelter it. As he looked about, he saw the bone of a bird's leg, and in this he put the plant to keep it safe. To his surprise the plant began to grow, and he sought again a larger covering for it. This time he found the leg-bone of a lion, and as he could not detach the plant from the bird's leg, he put both together in that of the lion. Yet again it grew and this time he found the leg-bone of an ass and put plant and all into that. And so he came to Naxos. And when he came to plant the vine—for the plant was in fact the first vine—he could not sever it from the bones that sheltered it, but planted them all together. Then the vine grew and bore grapes and men made wine and drank thereof. And first when they drank they sang like birds, and when they drank more they grew strong as lions, and afterwards foolish as asses[1].'

The disguise of the ancient god is thin indeed. His name is changed by an iota, but his character not a jot. S. Dionysius is god of the vine, and even retains his predecessor's connexion with Naxos. It is perhaps noteworthy too that in Athens the road which skirts the south side of the Acropolis and the theatre of Dionysus is now called the street of S. Dionysius the Areopagite. I was once corrected by a Greek of average education for speaking of the theatre of Dionysus instead of ascribing it to his saintly namesake.

Demeter again, although as we shall see later she still survives

[1] I have given the story in the form in which I heard it told by a peasant on board a boat in the Euripus. He was a native, I think, of Euboea, and being uneducated probably knew the story by oral tradition. A slightly longer form has, however, been published by Hahn (*Griech. Märchen*, vol. II. no. 76) and by Πολίτης (Μελέτη ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου τῶν νεωτέρων Ἑλλήνων, p. 43).

as a distinct personality, has been for the most part dispossessed by S. Demetrius. His festival, which falls in October and is therefore remote from harvest-time, is none the less celebrated with special enthusiasm among the agricultural classes; marriages too are especially frequent on that day[1].

Similarly Artemis, though she too is still known to the common-folk in some districts, has in the main handed over her functions to a saint of the other sex, Artemidos. Theodore Bent has recorded a good instance of this from the island of Keos (modern Zea). There is a belief throughout Greece that weakly children who show signs of wasting have been 'struck by the Nereids,'—by nymphs, that is, of any kind, whether terrestrial or marine. 'In Keos,' says Bent, 'S. Artemidos is the patron of these weaklings, and the church dedicated to him is some little way from the town on the hill-slopes; thither a mother will take a child afflicted by any mysterious wasting, "struck by the Nereids," as they say. She then strips off its clothes and puts on new ones, blessed by the priest, leaving the old ones as a perquisite to the Church; and then if perchance the child grows strong, she will thank S. Artemidos for the blessing he has vouchsafed, unconscious that by so doing she is perpetuating the archaic worship of Artemis, to whom in classical times were attached the epithets *παιδοτρόφος*, *κουροτρόφος*, *φιλομείραξ*; and now the Ionian idea of the fructifying and nourishing properties of the Ephesian Artemis has been transferred to her Christian namesake[2].' It might have been added that in this custom are reflected not only those general attributes of the tendance of children which Artemis shared with many other deities, but possibly also her power to undo any mischief wrought by her handmaidens, the nymphs[3].

Again there is every reason to suppose that S. Elias[4] whose chapels crown countless hilltops is merely the Christian successor to Helios, the Sun. The two names, which have only a moderate resemblance in the nominative, coincide for modern pronunciation in the genitive; and the frequency with which that case was needed in speaking of the church or the mountain-peak dedicated

[1] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθ. III. p. 164.
[2] Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 457.
[3] See below, pp. 169 f.
[4] I am unable to determine whether this saint is the prophet Elijah of the Old Testament, or a Christian hermit of the fourth century. The Greeks themselves differ in their accounts.

to one or the other may have facilitated the transition. Besides inheriting the mountain sanctuaries at which the worship of the Sun may have persisted from a very early age, S. Elias has also taken over the chariot of his predecessor, and thunder is sometimes attributed to the rolling of its wheels.

In other cases, without any resemblance of names, identity of attributes or functions suggested the substitution of saint for pagan deity. Hermes who in old times was the chief 'angel' or messenger of the immortals (*ἄγγελος ἀθανάτων*) was naturally succeeded by the archangel Michael, upon whom therefore devolves the duty of escorting men's souls to Hades; and to this day the men of Maina tell how the archangel, with drawn sword in his hand instead of the wand of his prototype, may be seen passing to and fro at the mouth of the caves of Taenarus through which Heracles made his ascent with Cerberus from the lower world, and which is still the best-known descent thereto. The supplanting of Hermes by Michael is well illustrated in the sphere of art also by a curious gem. The design is an ordinary type of Hermes with his traditional cap, and at his side a cock, the symbol of vigilance and of gymnastic sport; by a later hand has been engraved the name 'Michael'; the cock remained to be interpreted doubtless as the Christian symbol of the awakening at the last day of them that sleep[1].

The conversion of pagan temples or of their sites to the purposes of Christianity tells the same tale. The virgin goddess of Athens ceded the Parthenon to the Blessed Virgin of the Christians. The so-called Theseum, whether Theseus or Heracles was its original occupant, was fitly made over to the warrior S. George: but none the less what seems to have been an old pagan festival, known as the *ρουσάλια* (Latin *rosalia*)[2], continues to this day to be celebrated with dancing and feasting in its precincts. The Church of the Annunciation at Tenos, so famous throughout the Greek world for its miracles of healing, stands on the foundations of Poseidon's ancient sanctuary, and includes in its precincts a holy spring (*ἅγιασμα*) whose healing virtues, we can hardly doubt,

[1] Maury, in *Revue Archéologique*, I. p. 502.

[2] According to Pouqueville (*Voyage de la Grèce*, II. p. 170) the *rosalia* was formerly celebrated both at Parga in Epirus and Palermo in Sicily. The festival at Athens falls on Easter Tuesday, and a large number of peasants come in from the country to attend it.

were first discovered by the pagans: for Poseidon was worshipped in Tenos under the title of the 'healer' (ἰατρός)[1]. Indeed throughout the length and breadth of the land the traveller will find churches built with the material of the old temples or superimposed upon their foundation, and cannot fail to detect therein evidence of a deliberate policy on the part of the Church.

But in her attempts to be conciliatory she became in fact compromised. It was politic no doubt to encourage the weaker brethren by building churches on sites where they had long been wont to worship: it was politic to smooth the path of the common-folk by substituting for the god whom they had worshipped a patron-saint of like name or attributes. But in so doing the Church practically condoned polytheism. She drove out the old gods from their temples made with hands, but did not ensure the obliteration of them from men's hearts. The saints whom she set up in the place of the old deities were certain to acquire the rank of gods in the estimation of the people and, despite the niceties of ecclesiastical doctrine, to become in fact objects of frank and open worship. The adoption of the old places of worship made it inevitable that the old associations of the pagan cults should survive and blend themselves with the new ideas, and that the churches should more often acquire prestige from their heathen sites than themselves shed a new lustre of sanctity upon them. In effect, paganism was not uprooted to make room for the planting of Christianity, but served rather as an old stock on which a new and vigorous branch, capable indeed of fairer fruit but owing its very vitality to alien sap, might be engrafted.

Bitterly and despondently did the early Fathers of the Church, and above all S. John Chrysostom, complain of the inveteracy of pagan customs within the pale of the Church, while a kind of official recognition was given to many superstitions which were clearly outside that pale, if only by the many forms of exorcism directed against the evil eye or prescribed for the cure of those possessed by pagan powers of evil[2]. For illustration we need not fall back upon the past history of the Greek Church; even to-day she has not succeeded in living down the consequences of her

[1] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* § 30.
[2] See J. M. Neale, *History of the Holy Eastern Church*, p. 1042.

whilom policy of conciliation. The common-folk indeed profess and call themselves Christian; their priesthood is a Christian priesthood; their places of worship are Christian churches; they make the sign of the cross at every turn; and the names of God and Christ and the Virgin are their commonest ejaculations. But with all this external Christianity they are as pagan and as polytheistic in their hearts as were ever their ancestors. By their acceptance of Christianity they have increased rather than diminished their number of gods: in their conception of them and attitude towards them they have made little advance since the Homeric Age: and practically all the religious customs most characteristic of ancient paganism, such as sacrifice, the taking of auspices, and the consultation of oracles, continue with or without the sanction of the Church down to the present day.

These are strong statements to make concerning even the humblest and most ignorant members of the Holy Orthodox Church: but I shall show, I think, that they do not exceed the warranty of facts.

First of all then the peasant believes himself to be ever compassed about by a host of supernatural beings, who have no relation with his Christian faith, and some of whom he unconsciously acknowledges, by the very names that he applies to them, as 'pagan' beings and 'outside' the Christian fold[1]. To all of these—and they are a motley crew, gods and demons, fairies and dragons—he assigns severally and distinctly their looks, their dispositions, their habitations, and their works. To some of them he prays and makes offerings; against others he arms and fortifies himself in the season of their maleficence; but all of them, whether for good or ill, are to him real existent beings; no phantoms conjured up by trepidation of mind, but persons whose substance is proved by sight and hearing and touch.

Nothing is more amazing in the peasantry of modern Greece than their familiarity with these various beings. More than once I have overheard two peasants comparing notes on the ghostly fauna of their respective districts; and the intimate and detailed character of their knowledge was a revelation in regard to their powers of visualisation. It is the mountaineers and the mariners who excel in this; but even the duller folk of the lowlands see

[1] See below, pp. 66 ff.

much that is hidden from foreign eyes. Once however I did see a nymph—or what my guide took for one—moving about in an olive-grove near Sparta; and I must confess that had I possessed an initial faith in the existence of nymphs and in the danger of looking upon them, so lifelike was the apparition that I might have sworn as firmly as did my guide that it was a nymph that we had seen, and might have required as strong a dose as he at the next inn to restore my nerves. The initial faith in such things, which the child acquires from its mother, is no doubt an important factor in the visualisation; but it is certainly strange that often in Greece not one man only but several together will see an apparition at the same moment, and even agree afterwards as to what they saw.

These beings then are not the mere fanciful figures of old wives' fables, but have a real hold upon the peasant's belief and a firm place in his religion. To the objects of Christian worship or veneration—God and Christ and the Virgin together with the archangels and all the host of saints—have been accorded the highest places and chiefest honours: but beside them, or rather below them, yet feared and honoured too, stand many of the divine personalities of the old faith, recognised and distinguished still. Artemis, Demeter, and Charon, as well as Nymphs and Gorgons, Lamiae and Centaurs, have to be reckoned with in the conduct of life; while in folk-stories the memory at least of other deities still survives. To these remnants of ancient mythology the next chapter will be devoted; the purely pagan element in the modern polytheism may be sufficiently illustrated here by a few curious cases of the use even of the word 'god' (*θεός*) in reference to other than the God of Christendom.

In Athens, down to recent times, there was a fine old formula of blessing in vogue—and who shall say but that among the simpler people it may still be heard?—which combined impartially the one God and the many:—*νὰ σ' ἀξιώσῃ ὁ Θεὸς νὰ εὐχαριστήσῃς θεοὺς καὶ ἀνθρώπους*[1], 'God fit thee to find favour with gods and men!' In the island of Syra, according to Bent[2], it was 'a common belief amongst the peasants that the ghosts of the ancient Greeks come once a year from all parts of Greece

[1] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθ. III. p. 160.
[2] *The Cyclades*, p. 319.

to worship at Delos,...and even to-day they will reverently speak of the "god in Delos."' Another writer mentions a similar expression as used in several parts of the mainland, though only it would seem as an ejaculation, θεὲ τῆς Κρήτης or γιὰ τὸ θεὸ τῆς Κρήτης, 'by the god of Crete[1]!' In the island of Santorini (the ancient Thera) I personally encountered a still more striking case of out-spoken polytheism. I chanced one day upon a very old woman squatting on the extreme edge of the cliff above the great flooded crater which, though too deep for anchorage, serves the main town of the island as harbour—a place more fascinating in its hideousness than any I have seen. Wondering at her dangerous position, I asked her what she was doing; and she replied simply enough that she was making rain. It was two years since any had fallen, and as she had the reputation of being a witch of unusual powers and had procured rain in previous droughts, she had been approached by several of the islanders who were anxious for their vineyards. Moreover she had been prepaid for her work—a fact which spoke most eloquently for the general belief in her; for the Greek is slow enough (as doubtless she knew) to pay for what he has got, and never prepays what he is not sure of getting. True, her profession had its risks, she said; for on one occasion, the only time that her spells had failed, some of her disappointed clients whose money she had not returned tried to burn her house over her one night while she slept. But business was business. Did I want some rain too? To ensure her good will and further conversation, I invested a trifle, and tried to catch the mumbled incantations which followed on my behalf. Of these however beyond a frequent invocation of the Virgin (Παναγία μου) and a few words about water and rain I could catch nothing; but I must acknowledge that her charms were effectual, for before we parted the thunder was already rolling in the distance, and the rain which I had bought spoilt largely the rest of my stay in the island. The incantations being finished, she became more confidential. She would not of course let a stranger know the exact formula which she employed; that would mar its efficacy: she vouchsafed to me however with all humility the information that it was not by her own virtue that she caused the rain, but through knowing 'the god

[1] B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 28.

above and the god below' (*τὸν ἄνω θεὸ καὶ τὸν κάτω θεό*). The latter indeed had long since given up watering the land; he had caused shakings of the earth and turned even the sea-water red. The god above also had once rained ashes when she asked for water, but generally he gave her rain, sometimes even in summer-time. One thing she could not make out—who was the god that caused the thunder; did I know? I evaded the question, and our theological discussion went no further, for the god of thunder was making his voice heard more threateningly, and the old witch would not stay to make his acquaintance at closer quarters.

The physical interpretation of these references to the god above and the god below is not difficult. At the present day there are said to be three springs, and three only, in the whole island; nor are they of much use to the inhabitants; indeed the only one which I saw was dry save for a scanty moisture barely sufficient to keep the rock about it green and mossy: and in fact the population depends entirely upon rain-water stored up in large underground cisterns or reservoirs. Clearly the god below no longer gives water; but that there may have been more spring-water prior to the great eruptions of 1866 is very probable; for the people still call certain dry old torrent-beds by which the island is intersected 'rivers' (*ποταμοί*), and real rivers with water in them figure also in several of the local folk-stories. The perversity of the god above in sending ashes on one occasion instead of rain may also be understood in reference to the same eruptions, of which the old woman gave me a vivid description.

But the theology itself is more interesting than its material basis. This witch—a good Christian, they told me, but a little mad, with a madness however of which sane vine-growers were eager enough to avail themselves—acknowledged certainly three gods: the unknown thunder-god was clearly distinct from the god of the rain who was known to her: and there was also the god of the waters under the earth, in whose service she had perhaps followed the calling of a water-finder, and to whom she ascribed, as did the ancients to Poseidon, the shaking of the earth.

Polytheism then even in its purely pagan form is not yet extinct in Greece. In the disguise of Christianity, we shall see, it is everywhere triumphant.

Among the Christian objects of worship—for I have already

explained that by the common-folk the saints are worshipped as deities—the Trinity and the Virgin occupy the highest places, rivalled perhaps here and there by some local saint of great repute for miracles, but nowhere surpassed. It is the Virgin indeed who, in Pashley's opinion, 'is throughout Greece the chief object of the Christian peasant's worship[1]'; and certainly, I think, more numerous and more various petitions are addressed to her than to any person of the Trinity or to any saint. But the Trinity, or at any rate God (ὁ Θεός) and Christ (ὁ Χριστός), as the peasants say,—for the Holy Ghost is hardly a personality to them and is rarely named except in doxologies and formal invocations—are of almost equal importance, and are so closely allied with the Virgin that it is difficult to draw distinctions.

But while the Church has thus secured the first place for her most venerated figures, the influence of pagan feeling is clearly seen in the popular conception of this 'God.' His position is just such as that of Zeus in the old *régime*. He is little more than the unnamed ruler among many other divinities. His sway is indeed supreme and he exercises a general control; but his functions are in a certain sense limited none the less, and his special province is the weather only. Ζεὺς ὕει, said the ancients, and the moderns re-echo their thought in words of the same import, βρέχει ὁ Θεός, 'God is raining,' or ὁ Θεὸς ῥίχνει νερό, 'God is throwing water[2].' So too the coming and going of the daylight is described as an act of God; ἔφεξε, or ἐβράδειασε, ὁ Θεός, say the peasants, 'God has dawned' or 'has darkened.' When it hails, it is God who 'is plying his sieve,' ῥεμμονίζει[3] ὁ Θεός. When it thunders, 'God is shoeing his horse,' καλιγώνει τ' ἄλογό του, or, according to another version[4], 'the hoofs of God's horse are ringing,' βροντοῦν τὰ πέταλα ἀπὸ τ' ἄλογο τοῦ Θεοῦ. Or again the roll of the thunder sometimes suggests quite another idea; 'God is rolling his wine-casks,' ὁ Θεὸς κυλάει τ' ἀσκιά του[5], or τὰ πιθάρια του. And once again, because a Greek wedding

[1] *Travels in Crete*, vol. I. p. 250.

[2] Schmidt (*Volksleben der Neugr.* p. 31) records also the phrase κατουράει ὁ θεός, parallel with Strepsiades' joke (Ar. *Nub.* 373) πρότερον τὸν Δί' ἀληθῶς ᾤμην διὰ κοσκίνου οὐρεῖν.

[3] The word is extremely rare, but ῥεμμόνι, I was told, is a coarse kind of sieve. The expression is from Boeotia.

[4] From Arachova on Parnassus, Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugr.* p. 33.

[5] From Cyprus.

cannot be celebrated without a large expenditure of gunpowder, the booming of the thunder suggests to some that 'God is marrying his son' or 'God is marrying his daughters,' ὁ Θεὸς παντρεύει τὸν γιό του[1], or ταὶς θυγατέραις του[2].

Such expressions as these[3] are in daily use among the Greek peasantry: and nothing could reveal more frankly the purely pagan and anthropomorphic conception of God which everywhere prevails. The God of Christendom is indistinguishable from the Zeus of Homer. A line from a Cretan distich, in which God is described as ἐκεῖνος ἀποῦ συννεφιᾶ κι' ἀποβροντᾶ καὶ βρέχει[4], 'He that gathereth the clouds and thundereth and raineth,' exhibits a popular conception of the chief deity unchanged since Zeus first received the epithets νεφεληγερέτης and ὑψιβρεμέτης, 'cloud-gatherer,' 'thunderer on high.'

But even in the province of the weather God has not undivided control. The winds are often regarded as persons acting at their own will; and of the north wind in particular men speak with respect as Sir Boreas (ὁ κὺρ Βορεάς), for as in Pindar's time he is still 'king of the winds[5].' So too the whirlwind is the passing of the Nereids, and the water-spout marks the path of the Lamia of the sea. Even the thunder is not always the work of God, but some say that the prophet Elias is 'driving his chariot,' or 'pursuing the dragon.' The more striking and irregular phenomena in short are governed by the caprice of lesser deities—Christian saints or pagan powers—while God directs the more orderly march of nature.

When however we turn from the external world to the life of man, we find the functions of the supreme God even more closely circumscribed or—to put it in another way—more generally delegated to others. The daily course of human life with all its pursuits and passions is under the joint control of the saints and some of the old Hellenic deities. Of the latter, as I have said, another chapter must treat: but it should be remembered

[1] From Zacynthos, Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 32.

[2] From the island of Syme, near Rhodes.

[3] There is a good discussion of them by Πολίτης in Παρνασσός for 1880, pp. 585—608, 665—678, 762—773, from which some of my examples are taken. I have noted the *provenance* of the rarer expressions.

[4] Passow, *Pop. Carm.*, *Distich. Amat.* 242, quoted by Schmidt (*op. cit.* p. 30), who notes the Homeric parallel.

[5] *Pyth.* IV. 181 (322), Βασιλεὺς ἀνέμων.

that the peasant does not draw a hard and fast line of distinction between the two classes with whom for clearness' sake I am bound to deal separately. Thus Charon in many of the folk-songs which celebrate his doings is made to represent himself as a messenger of God, charged with the duty of carrying off some man's soul and unable to grant a respite[1]. He is occasionally addressed even as Saint Charon[2]; and his name constantly occurs in the epitaphs of country churchyards. A story too in Bernhard Schmidt's collection[3] illustrates well the way in which pagan and Christian elements are thus interwoven :—

'There was once an old man who had been good his whole life through. In his old age therefore he had the fortune to see his good angel (ὁ καλὸς ἄγγελός του); who said to him—for he loved him well—"I will tell thee how thou mayest be fortunate. In such and such a hill is a cave; go thou in there and ever onward till thou comest to a great castle. Knock at the gate, and when it is opened to thee thou wilt see a tall woman before thee, who will straightway welcome thee and ask thee of thine age and business and estate. Answer only that thou art sent by me: then will she know the rest." Even so did the old man: and the woman within the earth gave unto him a tablecloth and bade him but spread it out and say "In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost," and lo! everything that he wished would be found thereon. And thus it came to pass.

'Now when the old man had oft made use of it, it came into his heart to bid the king unto his house: who, when he saw the wonder-working cloth, took it from the old man. But because he was no virtuous man, the cloth did not its task in his hands; wherefore he threw it out of the window and straightway it turned to dust. So the old man went again to the woman in the hill, and she gave him this time a hen that laid a golden egg every day. When the king heard thereof, he had the hen too taken away from the old man. Howbeit in his keeping she laid not, and so he threw the hen also out of window, and she likewise turned to dust. So in his anger he bade seize the old man forthwith and cut off his head.

'But scarce was this done when there appeared before the king

[1] See *e.g.* Passow, *Pop. Carm.* nos. 426—432, and below, pp. 101—104.
[2] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχελάου, ἡ Σινασός, p. 159.
[3] *Märchen, etc.*, no. 19.

the Mistress of the Earth and of the Sea—for she was the woman in the hill—and when she had told him in brief words what awaited him after this life in requital for his wickedness, she stamped with her foot upon the ground, which swallowed up the castle with the king and all that was therein. But the old man that was slain had entered into Paradise.'

In this story the Mistress of the Earth and of the Sea (ἡ κυρὰ τσῆ γῆς καὶ τσῆ θαλάσσης) is, as we shall see later[1], none other than Demeter: but pagan as she is, she works in accord with the good angel (who is evidently her inferior), and orders the old man to invoke the Trinity.

Thus the peasant does not conceive of any antagonism between his pagan and his Christian objects of worship; and both classes are equally deserving of study by those interested in ancient Greek religion. For while every minutest trait or detail of the modern peasant's conception of those ancient deities, who, though despoiled of temples and organised worship, still survive, may throw some new ray of light on the divine personalities and the myths of old time, yet a more broad and comprehensive view of the outlines of ancient religion may be obtained by contemplating the worship of Christian saints who, though deficient often in personal significance, nevertheless by their possession of dedicated shrines and of all the apparatus of a formal cult occupy more exactly the position of the old gods and heroes.

The saints then, as I have remarked above, have a large share in the control of man's daily life. The whole religious sense of the people seems to demand a delegation of the powers of one supreme God to many lesser deities, who, for the very reason perhaps that they are lower in the scale of godhead, are more accessible to man. Under the name of saints lies, hardly concealed, the notion of gods. In mere nomenclature Christianity has had its way; but none of the old tendencies of paganism have been checked. The current of worship has been turned towards many new personalities; but the essence of that worship is the same. The Church would have its saints be merely mediators with the one God; but popular feeling has made of them many gods; their locality and scope of action are defined in exactly the old way; vows are made to the patron-saint of such and such a

[1] pp. 91 ff.

place; invocations are addressed to him in virtue of a designated power or function.

Local titles are often derived merely from the town or district in which the church stands, as Our Lady of Tenos, or S. Gerasimos of Cephalonia. In other cases they have reference to the surroundings of the sanctuary. The chapel of the Virgin in the monastery of Megaspelaeon consists of a large cave at the foot of some towering cliffs, and the dedication is to our Lady of the Golden Cave (Παναγία χρυσοσπηλαιώτισσα). In this case the word 'golden' is an imaginative addition, for the interior is peculiarly dark: but the dedication has been borrowed, owing to the repute of the original shrine, by churches which have not even a cave to show. In Amorgos S. George has the title of Balsamites, derived from the balsam which covers the hill-side on which stands his church. In Paros several curious dedications are mentioned by Bent, which he renders as Our Lady of the Lake, Our Lady of the Unwholesome Place, and S. George of the Gooseberry[1]. In Athens there is a church of which the present dedication is said to be due to a fire which blackened the *icon* of the Virgin, who is known on this account as Our smoke-blackened Lady (Παναγία καπνικαρέα), or, it may be, Our Lady of the smoky head, according as the second half of the compound is connected with the Turkish word for 'black' or the now obsolete Greek word κάρα, 'head[2].'

Titles denoting functions are equally numerous and quaint. In Rhodes the Archangel Michael is invoked as πατητηριώτης, patron of the wine-press[3]. S. Nicolas, who has supplanted Poseidon, often assumes the simple title of 'sailor' (ναύτης). S. John the Hunter (κυνηγός) owns a monastery on Mt Hymettus. In Cimolus there is a church of Our Guiding Lady (Παναγία ὁδηγήτρια)[4]. SS. Costas and Damien, the physicians, are known as the Moneyless (ἀνάργυροι), because their services are given gratis. S. George at Argostóli has been dubbed the Drunkard (μεθυστής)[5]—thus furnishing a notable parallel to the hero

[1] *The Cyclades*, p. 373.

[2] There is some likelihood that the title καπνικαρέα is a mere corruption of an older title which had a quite different meaning; but I am concerned only with the existing title as popularly interpreted.

[3] Ross, *Reisen auf den Griech. Inseln*, IV. p. 74.

[4] Bent, *Cyclades*, p. 46.

[5] So also in Paros, Bent, *Cyclades*, p. 373.

celebrated in old time at Munychia as *ἀκρατοποτης*[1]—because on his day, Nov. 3rd, the new wine is commonly tapped and there is much drinking in his honour.

In other cases the actual name of the saint has determined his powers or character without further epithet. S. Therapon is invoked for all kinds of healing (*θεραπεύειν*): S. Eleutherios (with an echo possibly of Eilythuia) to give deliverance (*ἐλευθερία*) to women in childbirth: S. James, in Melos, owing to a phonetic corruption of Ἰάκωβος into Ἄκουφος, to cure deafness[2]. S. Elias, the successor of the sun-god (*ἥλιος*), has power over drought and rain. S. Andrew (Ἀνδρέας) is implored to make weakly children 'strong' (*ἀνδρειωμένος*). S. Maura, in Athens, requires that no sewing be done on her day under pain of warts (locally known as *μαύραις*), which if incurred can only be cured by an application of oil from her lamp[3]. S. Tryphon resents any twisting (*στρήφω*) of thread, as in spinning, on his day; and on the festival of S. Symeon expectant mothers must touch no utensil of daily toil, above all nothing black; for S. Symeon 'makes marks' (*ὁ Ἅϊ Συμεὼν σημειόνει*), and a birth-mark would inevitably appear on the child. If however a woman offend unwittingly, she must lay her hands at once on that part of the body where the birth-mark will be least disfiguring to the child.

These are only a small selection of the saints whom the peasant seeks to propitiate, and it may be noted in passing that among them there are some characters, as among the ancient deities, either immoral as S. George the Drunkard, or unamiable as S. Maura, S. Tryphon, and S. Symeon. But a better idea of the multitude of the popular deities may perhaps be conveyed by giving a list of those worshipped in a single island with the functions there ascribed to them. Here is the catalogue given by a native of Cythnos[4]. The Virgin (*Παναγία*) is invoked on any and every occasion, and the SS. Anargyri (Costas and Damien) in all cases of illness. S. Panteleëmon is a specialist in eye-diseases, S. Eleutherios in obstetrics, S. Modestes in veterinary work, S. Vlasios in ulcers etc. S. Charalampes and S. Varvara (*Βαρβάρα*) deliver from pestilences, and S. Elias from drought.

[1] Athenaeus, II. 39 c.
[2] Bent, *Cyclades*, p. 72.
[3] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθ.* III. p. 153.
[4] Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας, *Κυθνιακά*, p. 131.

The power of protecting children from ailments is ascribed to S. Stylianos, and that of saving sailors from the perils of the sea to S. Nicolas, S. Sostes, and the SS. Akindyni (*ἀκίνδυνοι*). S. Tryphon deals with noxious insects, S. John the Baptist with ague, S. Menas with loss of goods, S. Paraskeve (Friday) with headache: while S. Aekaterine (Catherine) and S. Athanasios assist anxious mothers to marry off their daughters.

As in the multiplicity of the objects of worship, so too in the mental attitude of the worshipper, there is little change since first were written the words *δῶρα θεοὺς πείθει*, 'Gifts win the gods.' There are certain great occasions, it is true, now as in old days, on which religious feeling attains a higher level, and the mercenary expectation of blessings is forgotten in whole-hearted adoration of the blesser. But in general a spirit of bargaining tempers the peasant's prayer, and a return is required for services rendered. A sketch of the religious sentiments of the Sphakiotes given by the head of a Cretan monastery is worth reproducing, for it is typical of the whole Greek folk. 'The faith,' he writes, 'of these highlanders in Jesus Christ is sincere in every way, reverent, deep-seated, and unshaken, but unfortunately it is not free from superstitious fancies which mar this otherwise great merit. Many of them are fully persuaded that God, Our Lady, and the Saints go to and fro unseen above their heads, watch each man's actions, and take part in his quarrels, like the gods of Homer. They are under an obligation to work constant miracles, to vindicate and avenge, to listen readily to each man's requests and petitions, whether they be just or no. Many of the people go off cattle-lifting or on other wrongful enterprises, and at the same time call upon Our Lady, or any other saints of repute as wonder-workers, to assist them, and as payment for success promise them gifts! To some of the Saints they attribute greater power and grace than to the God who glorified them. In the same way they show greater reverence for this or that church or *icon*, and bring presents from great distances, in the belief that it has miraculous powers, without understanding that Faith works miracles equally in all places[1].'

Such is the verdict of an educated priest of the Greek Church who deplores the polytheism and idolatry of the common-

[1] Γρηγ. Παπαδοπετράκης, *Ἱστορία τῶν Σφακιῶν*, p. 69.

folk among whom he lives, and who in so doing speaks with the authority of intimate knowledge. Nor can the justice of the verdict be questioned by any one who has entered one of the more highly reputed churches of Greece and observed the votive offerings which adorn or disfigure it. For these offerings are of two qualities just as the motives which inspire them are twofold. There are the genuine thank-offerings, selected for their beauty or worth, which commemorate gratefully some blessing received; of such the treasury of the Church of the Annunciation in Tenos is full—gold and silver plate, bibles and service-books in rich bindings studded with jewels, embroideries of Oriental silk unmatched in skill and splendour. But there is another class, the propitiatory offerings designed to place the offerer in a special way under the protection of the saint. Most characteristic among these are the shreds of infected clothing sent by some sick person to the church of the particular saint whose healing power he invokes. Just as in the province of magic the possession of a strip of a man's clothing gives to the witch a control over his whole person, so in the religious sphere the dedication of some disease-laden rag from the body of the sufferer places him under the special care of the saint. In the church of 'S. John of the Column' at Athens the ancient pillar round which the edifice has been built is always garnished with dirty rags affixed by a daub of candle-grease; and if the saint cures those who send these samples of their fevers, he must certainly kill some of those who visit his sanctuary in person To this class of offerings belong also the bulk of the silver-foil trinkets which are so cheap that the poorest peasant can afford one for his tribute, and so abundant that at Tenos out of this supply of metal alone have been fashioned the massive silver candelabra which light the whole church. These trinkets are models of any object which the worshipper wishes to commend to the special attention of the saint. At Tenos they most frequently represent parts of the human body, for there the Virgin is above all a goddess of healing; but a vast assortment of models of other objects committed to her care may also be seen—horses and mules, agricultural implements, boats, sheaves of corn to represent the harvest, bunches of grapes in emblem of the vintage; there is no limit to the variety; anything for which a man craves

the saint's blessing is thus symbolically confided to her keeping. Doubtless among them there are a number of thank-offerings for mercies already received; I remember in particular a realistic model of a Greek coasting steamer with a list attached giving the names of the captain and crew who dedicated it in gratitude for deliverance from shipwreck. It may even be that some few of the models of eyes and limbs are thank-offerings for cures effected, and in beauty or worth are all that the peasant's artistic sense desires or his purse affords. But the majority of them, as I have said, are the gifts of those whose prayers are not yet answered and who thus keep before the eyes of the saint the maladies which crave her healing care.

Other offerings again may be dedicated with either motive. Candles and incense are equally suited to win a favour or to repay one. But whether the motive be propitiation or gratitude, the whole system is a legacy of the pagan world and permeated with the spirit of paganism. Everywhere the Christian disguise of the old religion is easily penetrable; the Church for instance has forbidden the use of graven images, and only in one or two places do statues or even reliefs survive: but the painted *icons* which are provided in their stead satisfy equally well the common-folk's instinct for idolatry.

Vows conditional upon the answering of some prayer usually conform outwardly at least to Christian requirements. Scores of the small chapels with which the whole country is dotted have been built in payment of such a vow; and often a boy may be seen dressed in a miniature priest's costume, because in some illness his mother devoted him to the service of God or of some saint for a number of years if only he should recover. But the idea of bargaining by vows is more pagan than Christian, and sometimes indeed an even clearer echo of ancient thought is heard, as when a girl vows to the Virgin a silver girdle if she will lay her in her lover's arms[1].

Miracles again are expected of the higher powers in return for man's services to them; for as the proverb runs, *ἅγιος ποῦ δὲν θαυματουργεῖ, δὲν δοξάζεται*, 'it is a sorry saint who works no

[1] Cf. a couplet quoted by Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, p. 253.

Τάζω σου, Παναγία μου, μίαν ἀσημένεαν ζώστρα,
νὰ μὰς συσμίξῃς καὶ τζὴ δυό σ' ἕνα κρεββατοστρώσι.

wonders.' And wonders are worked as the people expect—some in appearance, some in fact.

A sham miracle is annually worked by the priests of a church near Volo in Thessaly. Within the walls, still easily traced, of the old town of Demetrias on a spur of Mount Pelion stands an unfinished church dedicated to the Virgin. Here on the Friday after Easter there is a concourse from all Thessaly to see the miracle. At the east end of the church, on the outside, a square tank has been sunk ten or twelve feet below the level of the church floor, exposing, on the side formed by the church wall, ancient foundations—perhaps of some temple where the same miracle was worked two thousand years ago. The miracle consists in the filling of this tank with water; but seeing that under the floor of the church itself there are cisterns to which a shaft in each aisle descends, and that the tank outside, sunk, as has been said, to a lower level, undisguisedly derives its water from a hole in the foundations of the church, there is less of the marvellous in the fact that the priests by opening some sluice fill the tank than in the simple faith with which the throng from all parts presses to obtain a cupful of the miraculously fertilizing but withal muddy liquid. The women drink it, the men carry it home to sprinkle a few drops on cornfield or vineyard.

Genuine miracles, at any rate of healing, seem to be well established. After personal investigation and enquiry at the great festival of Tenos I concluded that some faith-cures had actually occurred. Some travellers[1] indeed have been inclined to scoff at these miracles and to write them down mere fabrications of interested priests. But in an official 'Description of some of the miracles of the wonder-working *icon* of the Annunciation in Tenos' the total number claimed down to the year 1898 is only forty-four, that is to say not an average even of one a year; and a large majority of the cases detailed—including twelve cases of mental derangement, eleven of blindness, and ten of paralysis, none of them congenital,—might I suppose come under the category of nervous diseases for which a faith-cure is possible; while several of the remainder, such as the case of a man who at first sight of the *icon* coughed up a fish bone which had stuck in his throat for two years, do not pass the bounds of belief; and

[1] *e.g.* Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 249.

even if the priests do sometimes set false or exaggerated rumours afloat, it must be conceded that the peasant, who has faith enough to believe their stories, has also faith enough, if faith-cures ever occur, to render such a cure possible in his case. Indeed no one who has been to the great centres of miraculous healing can fail to be impressed by the unquailing faith of the pilgrims. Year by year they come in their thousands, bringing the maimed and the halt and the blind, and, more pitiful still, the hopelessly deformed, for whose healing a miracle indeed were needed. Year by year these are laid to sleep in the church or in its precincts on the eve of the festival. Year by year they are carried where the shadow of the *icon* as it passes in procession may perchance fall on them. Year by year they are sprinkled with water from the holy spring. And year by year most of them depart as they came, maimed and halt and blind and horribly misshapen. Yet faith abides undimmed; hope still blossoms; and they go again and again until they earn another release than that which they crave. The very dead, it is said, have ere now been brought from neighbouring islands, but the *icon* has not raised them up. There are but few indeed whose faith has made them whole; but for my part I do not doubt that a boy's sight was restored at Tenos in the year that I was there (1899), or that similar occurrences are well established at such shrines as that of the Virgin at Megaspelaeon, of S. George in Scyros, or of S. Gerasimos in Cephalonia.

Closely bound up with these miraculous cures is the old pagan practice of ἐγκοίμησις, sleeping in the sanctuary of the god whose healing touch is sought. At Tenos the majority of the pilgrims who come for the festival of Lady-day can only afford to stop for the one night which precedes it. The sight then is strange indeed. The whole floor of the church and a great part of the courtyard outside is covered with recumbent worshippers. With them they have brought mattresses and blankets for those of the sick for whom a stone floor is too hard; by their side is piled baggage of all descriptions, cooking utensils, loaves of bread, jars of wine or water, everything in fact necessary for a long night's watch or slumber. And on this mass of close-packed suffering worshippers the doors of the church are locked from nine in the evening till early next morning. Shortly before the closing-hour I picked my way with difficulty in the dim light over

prostrate forms from the south to the north door. The atmosphere was suffocating and reeked with the smoke of wax tapers which all day long the pilgrims had been burning before the *icon*. Every malady and affliction seemed to be represented; the moaning and coughing never stopped: and I wondered, not whether there would be any miraculous cures, but how many deaths there would be in the six or seven hours of confinement before even the doors were again opened.

But this is the practice at its worst. Where there is more time available, there is nothing insanitary in it. In the list of cures at Tenos, to which I have alluded, there are many cases in which the patient spent not one night only but several months in the church. As a typical case I may take that of a sailor who while keeping look-out on a steamer in the harbour of Patras had some kind of paralytic seizure. He was taken to Tenos and for four months suffered terribly. Then about midday at Easter he had fallen asleep and heard a voice bidding him rise. He woke up and asked those about him who had called him; they said no one; so he slept again. This happened twice. The third time on hearing the voice he opened his eyes and saw entering the church a woman of unspeakable beauty and brilliance, and at the shock he rose to his feet and began to walk; and the same day accompanied the festival procession round the town to the astonishment of all the people.

When I was in Scyros I heard of an equally curious case of a long-deferred cure which had recently taken place and was the talk of the town. For seven consecutive years a man from Euboea had brought his wife, who was mad, to the church of S. George to 'sleep in' for forty days. Shortly before I arrived the last of these periods was just drawing to a close, when one night both the man and his wife saw a vision of S. George who came and laid his hand on her head; and in the morning she woke sane. Of her sanity when I saw her—for they were still in the island, paying, I think, some vow which the man had made—I had no doubt; and the evidence of the people of the place who for seven years previously had seen her mad seemed irrefragable.

The instances which I have cited are from the records of churches which have succeeded to the reputation possessed by Epidaurus in antiquity. These owing to the enthusiasm which

their fame inspires are probably the scenes of more faith-cures than humbler and less known sanctuaries. But in every church throughout the land the observance of the custom may occasionally be seen; for in the less civilised districts at any rate it is among the commonest remedies for childish ailments for a mother to pass the night with her child in the village church.

We shall notice in later chapters the remnants of other pagan institutions which the Greek Church has harboured—an oracle established in a Christian chapel and served by a priest—a church-festival at which sacrifice is done and omens are read—the survival of ancient 'mysteries' in the dramatic celebration of Good Friday and Easter. For the present enough has been said to show that, even within the domain of what is nominally Christian worship, the peasant of to-day in his conception of the higher powers and in his whole attitude towards them remains a polytheist and a pagan. And as in this aspect of religion, so in that other which concerns men's care for the dead and their conception of the future life, the persistence of pagan beliefs and customs is constantly manifest. The ancient funeral usages are undisturbed; and in the dirges which form part of them the heaven and the hell of Christianity seem almost unknown: 'the lower world' (ὁ κάτω κόσμος), over which rules neither God nor the Devil but Charon, is the land to which all men alike are sped.

But there is no need to dilate upon these matters yet. It is clear enough already, I hope, that the fact of Greece being nominally a Christian country should not preclude the hope of finding there instructive survivals of paganism. The Church did not oust her predecessor. By a policy of conciliation and compromise she succeeded indeed in imposing upon Hellenic religion the name of Christianity and the Christian code of morality and all the external appanages of Christian worship: but in the essentials of religion proper she deferred largely to the traditional sentiments of the race. She utilised the sanctuaries which other associations had rendered holy; she permitted or adopted as her own the methods by which men had approached and entreated other gods than hers; she condoned polytheism by appropriating the shrines of gods whom men had been wont to worship to the service of saints whom they inevitably would worship as gods instead; and even so she failed to suppress altogether

the ejected deities. The result is that for the peasant Christianity is only a part of a larger scheme of religion. To the outside observer it may appear that there are two distinct departments of popular religion, the one nominally Christian, devoted to the service of God and the Saints, provided with sanctuaries and all the apparatus of worship, served by a regular priesthood, limited by dogma and system; the other concerned with those surviving deities of pre-Christian Greece to whom we must next turn, free in respect of its worship alike from the intervention of persons and the limitations of place, obedient only to a traditional lore which each may interpret by his own feelings and augment by his own experience. But the peasant seems hardly sensible of any such contrast. His Christian and his pagan deities consort amicably together; prayer and vow and offering are made to both, now to avert their wrath, now to cajole them into kindness; the professed prophets of either sort, the priests and the witches, are endowed with kindred powers; everywhere there is overlapping and intertwining. And when the very authorities of the Greek Church have adopted or connived at so much of pagan belief and custom, how should the common-folk distinguish any longer the twin elements in their blended faith? Their Christianity has become homogeneous with their paganism, and it is the religious spirit inherited from their pagan ancestors by which both alike are animated.

# CHAPTER II.

## THE SURVIVAL OF PAGAN DEITIES.

### § 1. The Range of Modern Polytheism.

Thus far we have considered paganism in its bearing and influence upon modern Greek Christianity. We have seen how the Church, in endeavouring to widen her influence, countenanced many practices and conciliated many prejudices of a people whose temperament needed a multitude of gods and whose piety could pay homage to them all, a people moreover to whom the criterion of divinity was neither moral perfection nor omnipotence. From the ethical standpoint some of the ancient gods were better, some worse than men: in point of power they were superhuman but not almighty. Some indeed claimed that there was no difference in origin between mankind and its deities. 'One is the race of men' sang Pindar 'with the race of gods; for one is the mother that gave to both our breath of life: yet sundered are they by powers wholly diverse, in that mankind is as naught, but heaven is builded of brass that abideth ever unshaken[1].' One in origin, they are diverse in might. The test of godhead is power sufficing to defy death. Rightly therefore did Homer make 'deathless' and 'everbeing' his constant epithets for the gods. Immortality alone is the quality which distinguishes them in kind and not merely in degree from men, and makes them worthy of worship.

[1] Pindar, *Nem.* vi. 1

ἓν ἀνδρῶν, ἓν θεῶν γένος· ἐκ μιᾶς δὲ πνέομεν
ματρὸς ἀμφότεροι· διείργει δὲ πᾶσα κεκριμένα
δύναμις κ.τ.λ.

The opening phrase is often, even usually, translated 'one is the race of men, another the race of gods.' Whether ἓν...ἓν was ever used in Greek for ἄλλο...ἄλλο, I doubt; but even if it be possible, the emphasis ἓν...ἓν...ἐκ μιᾶς must to my mind be an emphasis upon unity, and the first mention of divergence comes equally strongly in διείργει δὲ...

A people wedded to such conceptions were naturally ready enough to install new immortals of whom they had not known before, but reluctant to depose in their favour those whom they and their forefathers had known and served. Dangers were to be apprehended from neglect; blessings were to be secured by tendance. Greater honour might be paid to one god, less to another; but from no immortal should service be wholly withheld: even unconscious oversights should be remedied by offerings 'to an unknown god.' Such in its essence was the popular religion, inconsistent it may be and not deeply intellectual, but in sympathies very broad—broad enough to encompass the worship of all immortals, broad as the earth and the sky and the sea wherein they dwelt and moved.

So vital and so deep-seated in the hearts of the common-folk are these religious tendencies, that even at the present day when the word 'Christian' has become a popular synonym for 'Greek' in contradistinction not only with 'Mohammedan,' but even sometimes with 'Western' or 'Catholic' or with 'Protestant,' and when horror would be excited by any imputation of polytheism, there are yet recognised a large number of superhuman and for the most part immortal beings, whom the Church has been able neither to eradicate from the popular mind nor yet to incorporate under the form of saints or devils in her own theological system. These beings, whether benignant to man or maleficent, are all treated as divine. In ancient times the common people had probably little appreciation of the various grades of divinity; indeed it was one of the seven sages, we are told, who first differentiated God and the lesser deities and the heroes[1]; and at the present day the common-folk are certainly no more subtle of understanding than they were then. God and the Saints and these pagan powers are all feared and worshipped in the several ways traditionally suited to each; but the fact of worship proclaims them all alike to be gods.

The origin of the non-Christian deities, even if we were unable to identify any of them with the gods of classical Greece, would be clearly enough proved by some of the general terms under which all of them are included. Those who use these

[1] Stobaeus, *Sentent.* p. 279, Πρῶτος Θαλῆς διαιρεῖ...εἰς θεὸν, εἰς δαίμονας, εἰς ἥρωας.

terms indeed no longer appreciate their significance; for all sense of antagonism between the pagan and Christian elements in the popular religion has, as we have seen, long been lost. But the words themselves are a relic of the early days in which the combat of Christianity with the heathen world was still stern. Among the most widespread of these terms is the word ξωτικά[1] (i.e. ἐξωτικά), the 'extraneous' powers, clearly an invention of the early Christians. The phrase 'those that are without' (οἱ ἔξω or οἱ ἔξωθεν) was used by S. Paul first[2] and afterwards generally by the Fathers of the Church to denote men of all other persuasions. In the fourth century Basil of Caesarea employed the adjective ἐξωτικός also in a corresponding sense[3]. This word no doubt became popular, and hence τὰ ἐξωτικά, 'the extraneous ones,' became a convenient term by which to denote comprehensively all those old divinities whose worship the Church disallowed but even among her own adherents could not wholly suppress. Another comprehensive term equally significant, if not so commonly used, is τὰ παγανά[4], 'the pagan ones.' This is in use in the Ionian islands and some parts of the mainland, but I have not met with it nor found it understood in the Peloponnese or in the islands of the Aegean Sea[5]. In Cephalonia it is chiefly, though not exclusively, applied to a species of supernatural beings usually called callicántzari (καλλικάντζαροι) of whom more anon: the reason of this restriction may be either the fact that these monsters—to judge from the folk-stories of the island—so far outnumber there all other kinds of 'pagan' beings that this one species has almost appropriated to itself the generic name, or that in old time, when the word παγανά, 'pagan,' was still understood in the sense which we attribute to it, these monsters were deemed specially 'pagan' because, as we shall see later, they delight in disturbing a season of Christian gladness. But elsewhere the term, still employed in what must have been its original meaning, comprises all kinds of non-Christian deities; and in earlier times

[1] For dialectic variations of the form, see Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugr.* p. 91.

[2] I. *Cor.* v. 12, I. *Tim.* iii. 7, and elsewhere.

[3] Basil III. 944 A (Migne, *Patrol. Graec.* vol. XXIX.).

[4] Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce*, I. p. 319, writes 'Pagania.'

[5] In Andros the word is used (in the singular παγανό) to denote an unbaptised child. Cf. Ἀντ. Μηλιαράκης, Τπομνήματα περιγραφικὰ τῶν Κυκλάδων νησῶν,—Ἄνδρος, Κέως, p. 45.

'the pagan ones' was probably as frequent an expression as its synonym 'the extraneous ones.' To these may perhaps be added the rare appellation recorded by Schmidt[1], *τσίνια*: for if the derivation from *τζίνα*, 'fraud,' 'deceit,' be right, it will mean 'the false gods.'

Besides these three names, which indicate the pre-Christian origin of these deities, there are several others—some in universal usage, others local and dialectic,—which represent them in various aspects. As a class of 'divinities' they are called *δαιμόνια*: as 'apparitions,' whose precise nature often cannot be further determined, *φάσματα* or *φαντάσματα* and, in Crete, *σφανταχτά*[2]: as swift and 'sudden' in their coming and going, *ξαφνικά*[3]: as ghostly and passing like a vision, *εἰδωλικά*: as denizens, for the most part, of the air, *ἀερικά*: and from their similarity to angels, *ἀγγελικά*.

It may seem strange that the first and the last of these terms, *δαιμόνια* and *ἀγγελικά*, should be practically interchangeable; for the Church at any rate did her best in early days to make the former understood in the sense of 'demons' or 'devils' rather than 'deities.' But the attempted change of meaning seems to have failed to make much impression on a people who did not view goodness as an essential of godhead; and in later times the Church herself, or many of her less educated clergy at any rate, surrendered to the popular ideas. Father Richard[4], a Jesuit resident during the seventeenth century in the island of Santorini, mentions the case of an old Greek priest who had long made a speciality of exorcism and was prepared to expel angels and demons alike from the bodies of those who were afflicted by them. The priest when questioned by the Jesuit as to what distinction he drew between demons and angels, replied that the demons came from hell, while the angels were *ἀερικόν τι*, a species of aërial being; but while he maintained a theoretical difference between them, his practice betrayed a belief that both were equally harmful. Exorcism had to be employed in cases of

[1] *op. cit.* p. 92, referring to Du Cange, *τζίνα* = fraus, p. 1571.
[2] *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστ. καὶ Ἐθν. Ἑταιρίας*, II. p. 122.
[3] Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 97.
[4] *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable à Sant-Erini, isle de l'Archipel, depuis l'etablissement des Pères de la Compagnie de Jesus en icelle* (Paris, 1657), p. 192 ff.

'angelic' as well as of 'demoniacal' possession; and Father Richard details the cruelties and tortures inflicted upon a woman suspected of the former in order to make the pernicious angelic spirit within her confess its name. The characters of δαιμόνια and ἀγγελικά are in fact the same, and the subtle theological distinctions which might be drawn between them are naturally lost on a people who see them treated even by the priests as equally baneful.

A few other local or dialectic names remain to be noticed. Two of them, στοιχειά and τελώνια, denote properly two several species of supernatural beings—the former being the *genii* of fixed places[1], and the latter aërial beings chiefly concerned with the passage of men from this world to the next[2]—and are only loosely and locally employed in a more comprehensive sense. The name σμερδάκια, recorded from Philiatrá in Messenia, is apparently a diminutive form from a root meaning 'terrible[3].' A Cretan word καντανικά is of less certain etymology, but if, as has been surmised, it has any relation with the verb καντανεύω, 'to go down to the underworld,' and hence 'to fall into a trance,' ('entranced' spirits being thought temporarily to have departed thither,) it may denote either denizens of the lower world or beings who frighten men into a senseless and trance-like state[4]. Next come the two words ζούμπιρα and ζωντόβολα, of which I believe the interpretation is one and the same. Bernhard Schmidt[5], whose work I have constantly consulted in this and later chapters, would derive the former from a middle-Greek word ζόμβρος[6], equivalent to the ancient τραγέλαφος, a fantastic animal of Aristophanic fame; but it was explained to me in Scyros to be a jocose euphemism as applied to supernatural beings and to denote properly parasitic insects. The implied combination of superstitious awe in avoiding the name of supernatural things with a certain broad humour in substituting what is, to the peasant, one of the lesser annoyances of life is certainly characteristic of the Greek folk; and the accuracy of the explanation given

[1] See below, pp. 255 ff.

[2] See below, pp. 284–7.

[3] Cf. Hesych. σμερδαλέος, σμερδνός = φοβερός, καταπληκτικός, πολεμικός; and σμέρδος = λῆμα, ῥώμη, δύναμις, ὅρμημα.

[4] Bybilakis, *Neugriechisches Leben*, p. 16, and in the periodical Φιλίστωρ, IV. p. 517.

[5] *op. cit.* p. 92.

[6] Steph. *Thesaur.* s.v.

to me is confirmed by the fact that in the island of Cythnos the other word, *ζωντόβολα*, is recorded to bear also the meaning of 'insects[1].' The joke, if such it be, must date from a long time back and in its prime must have enjoyed a widespread popularity; for at Aráchova on the slopes of Parnassus, a place far distant from Scyros, the word *ζούμπιρα* is employed in the sense of supernatural beings by persons who apparently are quite ignorant of its original meaning[2]. To these difficult terms must be added a few euphemisms of a simple nature—*τὰ πίζηλα* (i.e. *ἐπίζηλα*) 'the enviable ones' in one village of Tenos[3], and in many places such general terms as *οἱ καλοί* 'the noble,'—*οἱ ἀδερφοί μας* 'our brothers,'—*οἱ καλορίζικοι* 'the fortunate ones,'—*οἱ χαρούμενοι* 'the joyful ones.' These evasions of a more direct nomenclature are very frequent, and, since the choice of epithet is practically at the discretion of the speaker, it would be impossible to compile a complete list of them.

How far each of these names may be applied in general to all the classes of pagan gods and demons and monsters whom I am about to describe is a question which I cannot determine. On the one hand many of the names, as we have seen, are purely local, confined to a few villages or districts or islands and unknown and unintelligible elsewhere: and on the other hand some of these supernatural beings themselves are equally local, and my information concerning them has been gathered from widely separated regions of the Greek world. Hence it follows that while the several terms which I have explained are comprehensive in local usage and include all the supernatural beings locally recognised, it is impossible to say whether the users of them would think fit to extend them to the deities of other districts. Probably they would do so; but only for the most widely current terms, *δαιμόνια* and *ἐξωτικά*, can I claim with assurance anything like universal application.

The surviving pagan deities fall naturally into two classes. There are the solitary and individual figures such as Demeter, and there is the gregarious and generic class to which belong for example the Nymphs. An exceptional case may occur in which

[1] *Ἐφημ. τῶν Φιλομαθῶν*, anno 1861, p. 1851, quoted by Schmidt, *loc. cit.*
[2] Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 92. [3] *Ibid.*

some originally single personality has been multiplied into a whole class. The Lesbian maiden Gello, who, according to a superstition known to Sappho[1], in revenge for her untimely death haunted her old abodes preying upon the babes of women whose motherhood she envied, is no longer one but many; the place of a maiden, whom death carried off ere she had known the love of husband and children, has been taken by withered witch-like beings who none the less bear her name and resemble her in that they light, like Harpies, upon young children and suck out their humours[2]. But in the main the division holds; there are single gods and there are groups of gods. Of the former, in several cases, there is very little to record. Such memory of them as still lingers among the people is confined perhaps to a single folk-story out of the many that have been preserved. In such cases I do not feel entire confidence that the reference is a piece of genuine tradition; in spite of the popular form in which the stories are cast, it is always possible that, owing to the spread of education, some scholastic smatterings of ancient mythology have been introduced by the story-teller. There are certainly plenty of tales to be heard about Alexander the Great which are drawn from literary sources; and it is possible that two stories published by Schmidt which contain apparent reminiscences of Poseidon and of Pan are vitiated, from the point of view of folklore, in the same way. Fortunately the cases in which this reserve must be felt are few and in the nature of things unimportant: for, though proof of genuine tradition would be interesting, yet a single modern allusion is not likely to throw any light on the ancient conception of a deity or his cult. Where on the other hand modern folklore is more abundant—and in the case of the groups of lesser deities above all there is ample store of information—it is possible that study of the popular conceptions of to-day may illumine our understanding of ancient religion.

[1] Zenob. *Cent.* III. 3. Cf. Hesych. and Suidas, s.v. Γελλώ.

[2] Cf. Leo Allatius, *de quor. Graec. opin.* cap. III. *ad fin.*, quoting Mich. Psellus, *πᾶσαν τὴν ἐν τοῖς βρέφεσιν ἀπορροφᾶν ὥσπερ ὑγρότητα.*

## § 2. Zeus.

Ἐκ Διὸς ἀρχώμεσθα.

To Zeus, the ancient father of gods and men, belongs precedence; but there is in truth little room for him in the modern scheme of popular religion. His functions have been transferred to the Christian God, and his personality merged in that of the Father whom the Church acknowledges. But though he is no longer a deity, the ancient conception of him has imposed narrow limitations upon the character of his successor. We have noted already that the God now recognised exercises the same general control, as did formerly Zeus, over all the changes and chances of this mortal life, but has, again resembling Zeus, for his special province only the regulation of the more monotonous phases of nature and the weather. The more unusual phenomena, and among them sometimes even the thunder, to which S. Elias has pretensions, are delegated to saints or to non-Christian deities; but for the most part the thunder remains the possession of God, as it was always that of Zeus; and its more important concomitant, the lightning, is never, I think, attributed to S. Elias, but is wielded by God alone.

The very name of this weapon which the Christian God has inherited is suggestive of the Olympian *régime*. Much has been heard lately of the double-headed axe as a religious symbol which seems to have been constantly associated, especially in Crete, with the worship of Zeus. The modern Greek word for what we call the thunderbolt is ἀστροπελέκι (a syncopated form of ἀστραποπελέκι by loss of one of two concurrent syllables beginning with the same consonant), and means literally a 'lightning-axe.' The weapon therefore which the supreme God wields is conceived as an axe-shaped missile; and, though in the ancient literature which has come down to us we may nowhere find the word πέλεκυς used of the thunderbolt, there is no reason why the modern word should not be the expression of a conception inherited from antiquity and so furnish a clue to what in itself seems a simple and suitable explanation of the much-canvassed symbol.

Again the divine associations of the thunderbolt now as in the

reign of Zeus are attested by the awe in which men and cattle, trees and houses, which have been struck by lightning, are universally held—awe of that primitive kind which does not distinguish between the sacred and the accursed. It is sufficient that particular persons or objects have come into close contact with divine power; that contact sets them apart; they must not do common work or be put to common uses. In old days any place which had been struck was distinguished by the erection of an altar and the performance of sacrifice, but at the same time it was left unoccupied and, save for sacrificial purposes, untrodden[1]; it was both honoured and avoided. In the case of persons however the sense of awe verged on esteem. 'No one,' says Artemidorus, 'who has been struck by lightning is excluded from citizenship; indeed such an one is honoured even as a god[2].' The same feeling is still exhibited. The peasant makes the sign of the cross as he passes any scorched and blackened tree-trunk; but if a man has the fortune to be struck and not killed, he may indulge a taste for idleness for the rest of his life—his neighbours will support him—and enjoy at the same time the reputation of being something more than human.

But in spite of the reverent awe which the victim of the lightning excites, the thunderbolt is often viewed now, as in old time, as the instrument of divine vengeance. The people of Aráchova, when they see a flash, explain the occurrence in the phrase *κάποιον διάβολον ἔκαψε*, 'He has burnt up some devil,' and the implied subject of the verb, as in most phrases describing the weather, is undoubtedly God[3]. The same idea, in yet more frankly pagan garb, is well exhibited in a story from Zacynthos[4], which is nothing but the old myth of the war of the Titans against Zeus with the names of the actors omitted. The gist of it is as follows.

The giants once rebelled against God. First they climbed a mountain and hurled rocks at him; but he grasped his thunderbolts (*τσακώνει τὰ ἀστροπελέκια του*) and threw them at the giants, and they all fell down from the mountain and many were killed. Then one whose courage was still unshaken tied reeds to-

[1] Artemidorus, *Oneirocritica*, Bk II. cap. 9, p. 90.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 91.
[3] Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugr.* p. 33.
[4] Schmidt, *Märchen*, etc. p. 131.

gether and tried to reach to heaven with them (for what purpose, does not appear in the story; but folk-tales are often somewhat inconsequent, and this vague incident is probably an imperfect reminiscence of the legend of Prometheus); but the lightning burnt him to ashes. Then his remaining companions made a last assault, but the lightning again slew many of them, and the rest were condemned to live all their life long shut in beneath a mountain.

This story is one of those which in themselves might be suspected of scholastic origin or influence; but it so happens that practically the same story has been recorded from Chios also, with the slight addition that there the leader of the giants' assault has usurped the name of Samson. Such corroboration from the other end of the Greek world goes far to establish the genuine nature of the tradition.

Thus though Zeus has been generally superseded by the Christian God, his character and mythic attributes have left a strong and indelible mark upon the religion of to-day. The present conception of God is practically identical with the ancient conception of the deity who was indeed one among many gods and yet in thought and often also in speech the god *par excellence*. Christianity has effected little here beyond the suppression of the personal name Zeus.

All this, no doubt, illustrates the fusion of paganism with Christianity rather than the independent co-existence of deities of the separate systems. But there are two small facts in virtue of which I have given to Zeus a place among the pagan deities whose distinct personality is not yet wholly sunk in oblivion. The men of Aráchova, as we have noticed above, still swear by the 'god of Crete,' who can be no other than Zeus; and in Crete itself there was recently, and may still be, in use the invocation *ἠκοῦτε μου Ζῶνε θεέ*, 'Hearken to me, O god Zeus[1].' Such expressions, though their original force is no longer known by those who use them, are none the less indications that perhaps not many generations ago Zeus was still locally recognised and reverenced as a deity distinct from the Christian God, to whom indeed everywhere he can only gradually have ceded his position and his attributes.

[1] Soutzos, *Hist. de la Révolution Grecque*, p. 158. Cf. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 27.

## § 3. Poseidon.

For the survival of any god of the sea in the imagination of the Greek people I cannot personally vouch. Though I have been among the seafaring population in many parts, I have never heard mention of other than female deities. That which I here set down rests entirely on the authority of Bernhard Schmidt.

In his collection of folk-stories there is one from Zacynthos, entitled 'Captain Thirteen,' which runs as follows[1]:—A king who was the strongest man of his time made war on a neighbour. His strength lay in three hairs on his breast. He was on the point of crushing his foes when his wife was bribed to cut off the hairs, and he with thirteen companions was taken prisoner. But the hairs began to grow again, and so his enemies threw him and his companions into a pit. The others were killed by the fall, but he being thrown in last, fell upon them and was unhurt. Over the pit his enemies then raised a mound. He found however in the pit a dead bird, and having fastened its wings to his hands flew up and carried away mound and all with him. Then he soared high in the air until a storm of rain washed away the clay that held the feathers to his hands, and he fell into the sea. 'Then from out the sea came the god thereof (ὁ δαίμονας τῆς θάλασσας) and struck him with a three-pronged fork (*μία πειροῦνα μὲ τρία διχάλια*)' and changed him into a dolphin until such time as he should find a maiden ready to be his wife. The dolphin after some time saved a ship-wrecked king and his daughter, and the princess by way of reward took him for her husband and the spell was broken.

Other characteristics of this trident-bearing sea-god are, according to the same authority[2], that he is in form half human and half fish; that his wealth, consisting of all treasures lost in the sea, is so great that he sleeps on a couch of gold; and that he rides upon dolphins. Thus Poseidon, it appears, (or it may be Nereus,) has survived locally in the remembrance of the Greek people as a deity unconnected with Christianity. Far more generally however his functions have been transferred to S. Nicolas,

[1] Schmidt, *Märchen*, etc. no. xi.
[2] Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 135.

whose aid is invariably invoked by seamen in time of peril, and who has acquired the byname of 'sailor' (*ναύτης*)[1].

The allusion to the sea-god and his trident in the story which I have repeated must, I think, be accepted with some reserve as being possibly a scholastic interpolation. I cannot find confirmation of it in any other folk-story, and moreover the latter part of the tale is familiar to me in another form. The hero is usually a young prince who goes out to seek adventures in the world, not a king who has already a wife at home; and his transformation into a dolphin is effected by some malicious witch into whose toils he falls. But while for these reasons I do not put the story forward as certain evidence of the survival of Poseidon in the popular memory, I have recounted it at some length because it is an excellent type of current folk-tales, and from a study of it, if we may now leave Poseidon and make a brief digression, we may appreciate the relation existing between such stories and the myths of antiquity.

The king who was the strongest man of his time has a classical prototype in the Messenian leader Aristomenes. He too was thrown with his comrades into a pit by his enemies, the Spartans, and alone escaped death from the fall, being borne up on the wings of eagles. Again, the idea of a man's strength residing in a certain hair or hairs is well known in ancient mythology; and although it is by no means peculiar to the Greeks, but is common to many peoples of the world, we may fairly suppose that the modern Greek has not borrowed it from outside, but has inherited it from those ancestors among whose myths was the story of Scylla and Nisus. Lastly, in the incident of the hero fastening wings to his arms with clay and his subsequent fall into the sea there are all the essentials of the legend of Icarus.

Here then combined in one modern folk-story we find the *motifs* of three separate ancient myths. And from it and others of like nature—for in the collection from which I have borrowed it there are several stories in which such figures as Midas, the Sphinx, and the Cyclopes are easily recognised—an inference may be drawn as to the real relation of ancient mythology to modern folk-stories. Certain themes must have existed from time immemorial, and these have been worked up into tales by

[1] Πανδώρα (periodical) xvi. p. 538, *ἅγιε Νικόλα ναύτη*.

successive generations of *raconteurs* with ever-varying settings. Fresh combinations of *motifs* have been and are still being tried; fresh embroidery of detail may be added by each artist; only the theme in its plainest form, the mere groundwork of story, remains immutable. This at the same time explains the wide variations of the same myth even among the ancients themselves, and warns us not to judge of the value of a modern folk-story or folk-song by the closeness of its resemblance to any ancient myth which may have been preserved to us in literature. It was naturally the most finished and artistic presentment of the story which appealed to the taste of educated men and thus became the orthodox classical version; but there is every likelihood that before the story reached the stage of acknowledged perfection much that was primitive had been suppressed as inartistic, and much that was not traditional had been added by the poet's imagination. The unlettered story-teller, endowed with less fancy and ignorant of the conventions of art, is a far trustier vehicle of pure tradition; for though he feels himself at liberty to compose variations of the original theme, he certainly has less power and generally less inclination to do so; for it is on exactness of memory and even verbal fidelity to the traditional form of the story that the modern story-teller chiefly prides himself. Hence the modern folk-story, straight from the peasant's lips in a form almost verbally identical with that in which successive generations of peasants before him narrated it, may contain more genuinely primitive material than a literary version of it which dates from perhaps two thousand years or more ago.

## § 4. Pan.

A story, again from the same collection[1], runs in brief as follows:—Once upon a time a priest had a good son who tended goats. One day 'Panos' gave him a kid with a skin of gold. He at once offered it as a burnt-offering to God, and in answer an angel promised him whatsoever he should ask. He chose a magic pipe which should make all hearers dance. So no enemy could come near to touch him. The king however sent for him,

[1] B. Schmidt, *Märchen*, etc. no. xx.

and the goatherd, after making the envoys dance more than once, voluntarily let himself be taken. The king then threw him into prison, but he had his flute still with him, and when he played even houses and rocks danced, and fell and crushed all save him and his. 'The whole business,' concludes the story, 'was arranged by Panos to cleanse the world somewhat of evil men.'

Here the pastoral scene and the gift of the magic pipe (not by Panos himself, it is true, but indirectly thanks to him) suggest a genuine remembrance of Pan. It was from him that 'bonus Daphnis' learnt the art of music. The form which the name has assumed is the chief difficulty. The modern nominative, if formed in the same way as in other words of the same declension, would naturally be Panas (Πάνας), and the unusual termination arouses some suspicion that the narrator of the story had heard of Pan from some literary source and, as often happens in such cases, had got the name a little wrong. But if the tale be a piece of genuine tradition, the conclusion of it is remarkable. The moral purpose ascribed to the deity seems to indicate a loftier conception of him than that which is commonly found in ancient art and literature. But the popular tradition embodied in the legend is not therefore necessarily at fault; indeed it may be more true to the conception of Pan which prevailed among the common-folk in old days than were the portraits drawn and handed down by the more educated of their contemporaries. The patron-god of Arcadian shepherd-life would naturally have seemed a rude being to the cultured Athenians of the fifth century, who but for his miraculous intervention in the battle of Marathon would never have honoured him with a temple. But among his original worshippers it may well be that, besides presiding over the increase of their flocks, as did Demeter over the increase of their fields, he was deemed to resemble her also in the possession of more exalted attributes, so that there was cause indeed for lamentation over that strange message 'Great Pan is dead[1].'

But perchance Pan is not dead yet, or if dead not forgotten. And as this solitary modern story, if it be genuine, testifies to a longlived remembrance of his better qualities, so in the demonology of the middle ages a sterner aspect of his ancient character still secured to him men's awe. Theocritus[2] gave voice to a

[1] Plutarch, *de defect. orac.* 17. [2] *Idyll.* i. 15.

well-known superstition when he made the goat-herd say: 'Nay, shepherd, it may not be; in the noontide we may not pipe; 'tis Pan that we fear'; for in his rage if roused from his midday slumber he was believed to strike the intruder with 'panic' terror: and it was this superstition which influenced the translators of the Septuagint when they rendered the phrase, which in our Bible version of the Psalms[1] appears as 'the destruction that wasteth at noonday,' by the words *σύμπτωμα καὶ δαιμόνιον μεσημβρινόν*. By the latter half of this phrase the memory of Pan was undoubtedly perpetuated; for in certain forms of prayer quoted by Leo Allatius[2] in the seventeenth century, among the perils from which divine deliverance is sought is mentioned more than once this 'midday demon'; and a corresponding 'daemon meridianus[3]' found a place of equal dignity among the ghostly enemies of Roman Catholics.

Perhaps even yet in the pastoral uplands of Greece some traveller will hear news of Pan.

## § 5. Demeter and Persephone.

Of few ancient deities has popular memory been more tenacious than of Demeter; but in different districts the reminiscences take very different forms. There are many traces of her name and cult, and of the legends concerning both her and her daughter; but in one place they have been Christianised, in another they have remained pagan.

In so far as she has affected the traditions of the Church, a male deity, S. Demetrius, has in general superseded her. Under the title of *στερεανός*, 'belonging to the dry land,' he has in most districts taken over the patronage of agriculture; while his inherited interest in marriage receives testimony from the number of weddings celebrated, especially in the agricultural districts, on his day. But at Eleusis, the old home of Demeter's most sacred rites, the people, it seems, would not brook the substitution of a male saint for their goddess, and yielded to ecclesiastical influence only so far as to create for themselves a

[1] *Ps.* 91. 6. [2] *De quorumdam Graecorum opinationibus*, cap. VIII.
[3] Du Cange, *Lex. med. et infim. Latin*, s.v.

saint Demetra (ἡ ἁγία Δήμητρα) entirely unknown elsewhere and never canonised. Further, in open defiance of an iconoclastic Church, they retained an old statue of Demeter, and merely prefixing the title 'saint' to the name of their cherished goddess, continued to worship her as before. The statue was regularly crowned with garlands of flowers in the avowed hope of obtaining good harvests, and without doubt prayer was made before it as now before the pictures of canonical saints. This state of things continued down to the beginning of the nineteenth century. Then, in 1801, two Englishmen, named Clarke and Cripps, armed by the Turkish authorities with a license to plunder, perpetrated an act unenviably like that of Verres at Enna, and in spite of a riot among the peasants of Eleusis removed by force the venerable marble; and that which was the visible form of the great goddess on whose presence and goodwill had depended from immemorial ages the fertility of the Thriasian plain is now a little-regarded object catalogued as 'No. XIV, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, (much mutilated)[1].'

Saint Demetra however, though lost to sight, was yet dear to the memory of the village-folk; and in spite of the devastation of old beliefs and legends which the much-vaunted progress and education of Greece have committed in the more civilised districts without conferring any sensible compensation, the antiquarian Lenormant found in 1860 an old Albanian[2] priest who when once reassured that no ridicule was intended, recited to him the following remarkable legend[3]: 'S. Demetra was an old woman of Athens, kind and good, who devoted all her little means to feeding the poor. She had a daughter who was beautiful past all imagining; since "lady Aphrodite" (κυρὰ Ἀφροδίτη) none had been seen so lovely. A Turkish lord of the neighbourhood of Souli, who was a wicked man and versed in magic, saw her one day combing her hair, which was of golden hue and reached to the very ground, and became passionately enamoured of her. He bided his time, and having found his chance of speaking with her tried to seduce her. But she being as prudent as she was beautiful, repulsed all the miscreant's advances. Thereupon he resolved

[1] Clarke, *Catalogue of Sculptures in Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.*

[2] The population of Eleusis, as of many villages in Attica, is mainly Albanian; but they have inherited many of the old Greek superstitions and customs.

[3] Lenormant, *Monographie de la voie sacrée éleusinienne*, p. 399 ff.

to carry her off and put her in his harem. One Christmas night, while Demetra was at church, the Turk (ὁ ἀγᾶς) forced the door of her house, seized the girl who was at home alone, carried her off in spite of her cries of distress, and holding her in his arms leapt upon his horse. The horse was a wonderful one; it was black in colour; from its nostrils it breathed out flames, and in one bound could pass from the East unto the West. In an instant it had carried ravisher and victim right to the mountains of Epirus.

When the aged Demetra came back from church, she found her house broken into and her daughter gone; great was her despair. She asked her neighbours if they knew what had become of her daughter; but they dared not tell her aught, for they feared the Turks and their vengeance. She turned her enquiries to the tree that grew before her house; but the tree could tell her nothing. She asked the sun, but the sun could give her no help; she asked the moon and the stars, but from them too she learnt nothing. Finally the stork that nested on the house-top said to her: "Long time now we have lived side by side; thou art as old as I. Listen; thou hast always been good to me, thou hast never disturbed my nest, and once thou didst help me to drive away the bird of prey that would have carried off my nestlings. In recompense I will tell thee what I know of the fate of thy daughter; she was carried off by a Turk mounted on a black horse, who took her towards the West. Come, I will set out with thee and we will search for her together."

Accompanied by the stork, Demetra started; the time was winter; it was cold, and snow covered the mountains. The poor old woman was frozen and could hardly walk; she kept asking of all those whom she met, whether they had seen her daughter, but they laughed at her or did not answer; doors were shut in her face and entrance denied her, for men love not misery; and she went weeping and lamenting. In this manner however she dragged her limbs as far as Lepsína (the modern form of the name Eleusis); but, arriving there, she succumbed to cold and weariness and threw herself down by the roadside. There she would have died, but that by good luck there passed by the wife of the *khodja-bachi* (or head man of the village), who had been to look after her flocks and was returning. Marigo—such was her name—took pity on the old woman, helped her to rise and brought her to her husband,

who was named Nicolas[1]. The *khodja-bachi* was as kind as his wife; both welcomed as best they could the poor sorrow-stricken woman, tended her and sought to console her. To reward them S. Demetra blessed their fields and gave them fertility.

Nicolas, the *khodja-bachi*, had a son handsome, strong, brave, and practised, in a word the finest *pallikar* of all the country side. Seeing that Demetra was in no condition to continue her journey, he offered to set to work to recover her daughter, asking only her hand in recompense. The offer was accepted, and he set out accompanied by the faithful stork who would not abandon the undertaking.

The young man walked for many days without finding anything. At last one night, when he was in a forest right among the mountains, he caught sight of a great bright light at some distance. Towards this he hastily bent his steps, but the point from which the light came was much further off than he had at first imagined; the darkness had deceived him. Eventually however he arrived there, and to his great astonishment found forty dragons lying on the ground and watching an enormous cauldron that was boiling on the fire. Undismayed by the sight, he lifted the cauldron with one hand, lit a torch, and replaced the vessel on the fire. Astounded by such a display of strength, the dragons crowded round him and said to him, "You who can lift with one hand a cauldron which we by our united efforts can scarcely carry, you alone are capable of carrying off a maiden whom we have long been trying to lay our hands on, and whom we cannot seize because of the height of the tower wherein a magician keeps her shut up." The son of the *khodja-bachi* of Lepsína perceived the impossibility of escape from these monsters. Accompanied by the forty dragons, he approached the tower, and after having examined it, he asked for some large nails, which he took and drove into the wall, so as to form a kind of ladder, and which he kept pulling out again as he ascended to prevent the dragons from following him. Having arrived at the top and with some difficulty entered at a small window there, he invited the dragons to ascend as he had done, one by one, which they did, thus giving him time to kill each as it arrived while the next was

[1] "The diminutive in Albanian of Nicolas is Kolio: in the choice of this name is there not a reminiscence of that of Celeus?"—so Lenormant in a note. The suggestion does not appear to me very probable.

climbing up, and to throw it over the other side of the tower, where there were a large court, a splendid garden, and a fine castle. Thus rid of his dangerous guardians, he went down into the interior of the tower and found there S. Demetra's daughter, whose beauty at once inspired him with the most ardent love.

He was kneeling at her feet when suddenly the magician appeared, and in a fury of anger threw himself upon the young man, who met him bravely. The former was of superhuman strength, but Nicolas' son was not inferior to him. The magician had the power to transform himself into any thing he might choose; he changed successively into a lion, into a serpent, into a bird of prey, into fire—hoping under some one of these forms to wear his adversary out; but nothing could shake the courage of the young man. For three days the combat continued. The first day the magician seemed beaten, but the next he regained his advantage; at the end of the day's struggle he killed his young opponent, and cut his body into four quarters, which he hung on the four sides of the tower. Then elated by his victory, he did violence to Demetra's daughter, whose chastity he had hitherto respected. But in the night the stork flew away to a great distance to fetch a magic herb which it knew, brought it back in its beak, and rubbed with it the young man's lips. At once the pieces of his body came together again and he revived. Great was his despair when he learnt what had taken place after his defeat; but he only threw himself upon the magician with the greater fury the third day, to punish him for his crime.

Once again the young man, it seemed, was on the point of being vanquished, when suddenly he conceived the happy idea of invoking the Panagia, vowing that if victorious he would become a monk at the monastery of Phaneroméne[1]. The divine protection which he had invoked gave him strength and he succeeded in throwing his adversary: the stork, who had aided him so much, at once attacked the fallen magician and picked out his eyes; then with its beak pulled out a white hair noticeable among the black curls that covered his head. On this hair depended the life of the Turkish magician, who immediately expired.

[1] Opposite Eleusis in Salamis.

His conqueror, taking with him the girl, brought her back to Lepsína, just at the season when spring was coming and the flowers were beginning to appear in the fields. Then he went, as he had vowed, and shut himself up in the monastery. S. Demetra, having received back her daughter, went away with her. What became of them afterwards, no one knows; but since that time the fields of Lepsína, thanks to the blessing of the Saint, have not ceased to be fertile.'

It would be superfluous to point out the numerous details of this legend which accord explicitly with the account of the rape of Persephone in the Homeric hymn. The interspersion of Christian ideas and reminiscences of Turkish domination and stories of fabulous monsters may strike oddly on the ear unacquainted with the vagaries of Greek folk-stories. Yet the most sceptical could not doubt that the tradition which forms the groundwork of the legend is none other than the old myth, or that the four chief actors in the drama are none other than Demeter and Core, Pluto and Triptolemus. Pluto, masked as a Turkish *agha*, is perhaps the least readily recognisable; yet in one way as a relic of ancient tradition the part he plays is the most remarkable in the whole legend. It is to Souli in Epirus that he carries off the maiden. Now this is the district of the ancient Cocytus and Acheron; here was one of the descents to the lower world; here Aidoneus held sway; and here, in one version of the myth[1], was laid the scene of the rape of Persephone by that god. Hence the claims of two separate localities to the same mythological distinction seem by some means to have become incorporated in the single modern legend.

In the same part of Epirus, according to Lenormant, a similar story to that which he heard at Eleusis concerning S. Demetra's daughter, is told, *mutatis mutandis*, of S. Demetrius: but since either a sense of propriety or a want of knowledge prevented him from publishing the details of it, the mere statement that it existed is of no great value. But the legend which he narrates in full may I think be accepted as genuine without corroboration on the grounds of its own structure. Lenormant has indeed been accused of *mala fides* in his own department of archaeology and of tampering with some of the inscriptions which he published;

[1] Euseb. *Chron.* p. 27. Plut. *Vita Thes.* xxxi. *ad fin.*

but even if this charge could be substantiated, I should doubt whether he had either the inclination to invent a legend which he only mentions in a cumbrous foot-note, or the ability to fuse ancient and modern ideas into so good an imitation of the genuine folk-story. In my judgement the construction of the legend is practically proof of its genuinely popular origin.

Thus Eleusis and, in a lesser degree, the many places where S. Demetrius has succeeded to the chief functions of Demeter have hardly yet lost touch with the ancient worship of the goddess, Christianised in form though it may be. But Arcadia too, where alone of all the Peloponnese the indigenous population were secure from the Achaean and Dorian immigrations and maintained in seclusion the holiest of Pelasgian cults, preserves to the present day in story and in custom some vestiges of the old religion; and here they are less tinged with Christian colour.

Near the city of Pheneos, which according to Pausanias[1] was the scene of mysteries similar to those enacted at Eleusis, there are some underground channels by which the waters of Lake Pheneos are carried off, soon to reappear as the river Ladon. These channels were believed by Pausanias himself to be artificial—the work of Heracles, it was said, who also constructed a canal close by, traces of which are still visible: but according to another authority[2] they were the passage by which Pluto carried off Persephone to the infernal regions. Some memory of the latter belief seems still to linger among the people of Phoniá (the modern form of Pheneós), who call these subterranean vents ἡ τρούπαις τοῦ διαβόλου, 'the holes of the devil,' and who further believe that it is through them that the spirits of the dead pass to the lower world. My guide informed me also that the rise or fall of the waters of the lake—the level varies to an extraordinary degree—furnishes an augury as to what rate of mortality may be expected in the village. If the water is high, the lower world is for the time being congested and requires no more inhabitants; if it sinks, the lower world is empty, and thirsts for fresh victims. The connexion of such beliefs with the cult of Persephone, though vague, is probably real; but how general they may be among the present villagers I cannot say; Dodwell[3] apparently heard nothing of

[1] Paus. VIII. 15.
[2] Conon, *Narrat.* 15
[3] *Tour through Greece*, II. p. 440.

them except the name of 'the devil's holes,' and the explanation of this name which was given to him took the form of a story about a conflict between the devil and a king of Phoniá, in which the former hurled explosive balls of grease at his adversary, one of which set him on fire and drove his body right through the base of the mountain which rises from the lake's edge, leaving thereafter an escape for the waters. There is certainly nothing in common between this story, which Leake also heard in a slightly different version[1], and the beliefs communicated to me; and I suspect that it is a comparatively modern aetiological fable designed perhaps to satisfy the curiosity of children concerning the name. The belief that the subterranean channel is a descent to the lower world is more clearly a vestige of the old local cult of Kore.

Again in the neighbourhood of Phigalia there is current among the peasantry a curious story which I tried in vain to hear recited in full, but only obtained in outline at second-hand. I cannot consequently vouch for its accuracy, but such as it is I give it. There once were a brother and sister, of whom the former was very wicked and a magician, while the latter was very virtuous and beautiful. Her beauty was indeed so wonderful, that her brother became enamoured of her. In her distress she fled to a cave near Phigalia, hoping to elude his pursuit; but the magician straightway discovered her. Then being at her wits' end how to save herself from the unholy passion which her beauty inspired, she prayed to be turned into some beast. Her prayer was straightway granted, but the wicked magician had power to change himself likewise. So when they had both been changed into several shapes he at length overcame her. But no sooner was the infamous deed done, than the Panagia caused an earthquake, and the roof of the cave fell and destroyed both brother and sister together.

A story of incest necessarily ends at the present day among the highly moral countryfolk of Greece with punishment inflicted by some Christian deity: but for the rest the story is practically the same as that which Pausanias heard concerning Poseidon and his sister Demeter in the same district[2]. In the old version,

[1] *Travels in the Morea*, III. p. 148.
[2] Paus. VIII. 42. 1—4, and 25. 5.

which Pausanias gives very briefly, there is only one transformation mentioned, that of Demeter into a mare and of Poseidon into a horse; but it is at least noteworthy that the statue of horse-headed Demeter which commemorated this incident is said to have had 'figures of snakes and other wild animals' fixed on its head; and possibly, if Pausanias had given a fuller version of the myth, we should find that these figures related to other transformations which Demeter had tried in vain before in equine form she was finally forced to yield. The mention of the cave in the modern story is also significant; for though the cave in the ancient version is not the scene of the rape, it was there that Demeter hid herself in her anger afterwards and there too that the statue of horse-headed Demeter was set up. It would be interesting to know whether the horse is one of the forms assumed in the modern story; perhaps some other traveller will be fortunate enough to hear the tale in full.

In northern Arcadia I also learnt that the flesh of the pig, in respect of which the ordinary *Graeculus* fully deserves the epithet *esuriens*, is taboo; and the result of eating it is believed to be leprosy. It might be supposed that this superstition has resulted from contact with Mohammedans; but such an explanation would not account for the confinement of it to one locality—and that a mountainous and unprofitable district where intercourse with the Turks must have been small; and further the Greek would surely have found a malicious pleasure, the most piquant of sauces, in eating that which offended the two peoples whom he most abhors, Turks and Jews. On the other hand, if we suppose this fear of swine's flesh to be a piece of native tradition, its origin may well be sought in the ritual observances of the old cult of Demeter and her daughter, to whom the pig was sacred and in whose honour it was sacrificed once only in each year, at the festival of the Thesmophoria[1]. There are many instances among different peoples of the belief that skin diseases, especially leprosy, are the punishment visited upon those who eat of the sacred or unclean animal; for the distinction between sacred and unclean is not made until a primitive sense of awe is inclined by conscious reasoning in the direction either of reverence

[1] Schol. in Ar. *Ran.* 441. Aelian, *Hist. Anim.* x. 16.

or of abhorrence[1]. Thus in Egypt, the land from which the Pelasgians, if Herodotus[2] might be believed, derived the worship of Demeter, it was held that the drinker of pig's milk incurred leprosy[3]; and we may reasonably suppose that the same punishment threatened those Egyptians who tasted of pig's flesh save at their one annual festival when this was enjoined[4]. Now the Thesmophoria resembled this Egyptian festival in that it was an annual occasion for sacrificing pigs and for partaking therefore of their flesh; if then the worshippers of Demeter, like the Egyptians, were forbidden to use the pig for food at other times, and if the penalty for disobedience in Greece too was believed to be leprosy, the present case of taboo in Arcadia—the only one known to me in modern Greece—may be a survival from the ancient cult.

But apart from these traces of the worship of Demeter and Kore in Christian worship, in folk-story, and in custom, traces which constitute in themselves cogent proof of the firm hold on the popular mind which the goddesses twain must long have kept, there exists in the belief of the Greek peasantry a personal Power, a living non-Christian deity, who still inspires awe in many simple hearts and who may reasonably be identified with one or rather perhaps with both of them.

For it must not be forgotten that the mother and the daughter were in origin and symbolism one. The idea of life's ebb and flow, of nature's sleeping and waking, is expressed in them severally as well as conjointly. It would be impossible to analyse the complete myth and, even if a purely physical interpretation were sought, to express in physiological terms the two persons and the parts which they play: for certain ideas find duplicate expression. Either Demeter's retirement to some dark cave or the descent of Persephone to the underworld might have represented alone and unaided the temporary abeyance of earth's productive powers. Yet it was with good reason that the myth expanded as it were spontaneously until the spirit of life, that pervades not only the cornfield but all that is animal and human too, was pourtrayed in double form; not because the mere physical fact of the decay and

[1] Frazer, *Golden Bough*, II. 44 ff. (2nd edit.).
[2] Herod. II. 171. [3] Aelian, *l.c.*
[4] Herod. II. 47. Plut. *Isis et Osiris*, 8 (*Moral.* 354). Aelian, *l.c.*

the revival of vegetation needed larger symbolism for its due expression, but because in the tie of mother and daughter and all that it connotes was fitly represented that by which the life-spirit works among the higher orders of created things, that which goes before life's manifestations and outlasts its vanishings, the spirit of love.

Of all such ideas as these the modern peasant, needless to say, is wholly innocent. He has learnt from his ancestors of a woman beautiful, reverend, deathless, who dwells within a mountain of his land, and who by her dealings with mankind has proved her real and divine puissance. Her name is no more uttered, perchance because it is too holy for men of impure lips; they speak only of 'the Mistress.' She is a real person, not the personification of any natural force. The tiller of the land foresees his yearly gain from cornfield and vineyard; the shepherd on the mountain-side expects the yearly increase of his flock; but by neither is any principle inferred therefrom, much less is such a principle personified; the blessing which rests on field and fold is the work of a living goddess' hands. Flesh and blood she is, even as they themselves, but immortal and very mighty, nobler than many of whom the priests preach, stronger to help the good and to punish the wicked. Simple people they are, who still believe such things, and ignorant; yet less truly ignorant than some half-educated pedants of the towns who vaunt their learning in chattering of 'Ceres' rather than of 'Demeter' and, misled by Roman versifiers who at least had an excuse in the exigencies of metre, misinterpret the name as a mere synonym for corn. Happily however the influence of the schools—for it is amongst the schoolmasters that the worst offenders in this respect are to be found—is not yet all-reaching, and in the remoter villages tradition is still untainted. There without fear of ridicule men may still confess their faith in the great compassionate goddess.

It was in Aetolia that I first recognised the popular belief in this deity. There I heard tell of one who was called *ἡ κυρὰ τοῦ κόσμου*, 'the mistress of the world.' Her dwelling was in the heart of a mountain, the means of access to it a cave, but where situated, the peasants either did not know or feared to tell. Her character indeed was ever gracious and kindly, but it may be they thought she would resent a foreigner's approach. In

her power was the granting of many boons, but her special care was the fertility of the flocks and the abundance of the crops, including in that district tobacco.

This revelation convinced me of the accuracy of what I had previously suspected only in North Arcadia and in Messenia. In both those regions I had heard occasional mention among the peasants of one whose title was simply *ἡ δέσποινα*, 'the Mistress.' The word had always struck me as curious, for in ordinary usage it is obsolete and the mistress of a house or whatever it may be is always *ἡ κυρά* (i.e. *κυρία*). Knowing however that the Church had preserved the title *ἡ δέσποινα* among those under which the Virgin may be invoked, I was disposed at first to think that the dedication of some church in the neighbourhood had influenced the people to use the rare name *ἡ δέσποινα* instead of the ordinary 'Panagia.' But when I enquired where the church of 'the Mistress' was, the answer was 'she has none': and yet, on making subsequent enquiries of other persons, I found that there was a church of the Panagia close by. Clearly then it was not in the ecclesiastical sense that the title *ἡ δέσποινα* was being used. More than this I failed to elicit—the peasants of the Peloponnese are on the whole more suspicious and secretive than those of northern Greece—but I have little doubt that this goddess is the same as she who in Aetolia bears a title more colloquial in form but identical in meaning.

The existence of this deity among the survivals of the old religion has never, I think, been observed by any writer on the subject of Greek folk-lore. But in Bernhard Schmidt's collection of popular stories and songs there is evidence, whose value he himself did not recognise, to corroborate it. One of the songs[1] from Zacynthos contains the lines:

> Ἔκαμ' ὁ Θεὸς κι' ἡ Παναγιὰ κι' ἡ Δέσποινα τοῦ κόσμου,
> καὶ ἐπολέμησα με Τούρκους, μ' Ἀρβανίταις·
> χίλιους ἔκοψα, χίλιους καὶ δυὸ χιλιάδες.

'They wrought in me, even God and the Virgin and the Mistress of the world, and I fought with Turks and with Albanians: a thousand I slew, a thousand yea and two thousand.'

The editor of this song omits from his translation and does not even mention in his notes the last phrase of the first line, assum-

[1] *Märchen* etc. Song no. 56.

ing, I suppose, that the Virgin is mentioned twice over under two different titles; but it is at least possible that three persons are intended. God and the Virgin belong to the category of Christian deities; the third may be the pagan goddess already discovered in Messenia, Arcadia, and Aetolia; if so, the collocation of her name along with those of the highest Christian powers is strong testimony to the reverence with which the people of Zacynthos too were wont, and perhaps still continue, to regard her.

In Schmidt's stories again yet another variation of the title occurs. In one, which has already been narrated in full[1], 'the Mistress of the earth and of the sea' (ἡ κυρὰ τσῆ γῆς καὶ τσῆ θάλασσας) rewards a poor man, on the recommendation of his good angel, with miraculous gifts, and when he is slain by an envious king, herself appears and sends down the tyrant quick into the pit where punishment for his wickedness awaits him. Another, in which the same ample appellation is used, runs in brief as follows[2]:

'Once upon a time a king on his return from a journey gave to his eldest son as a present a picture of "the Mistress of the earth and of the sea." The prince was so dazzled by her beauty that he resolved to seek her out and make her his wife. He accordingly consulted a witch who told him how to find the palace where the Mistress of earth and sea lived, and warned him also that before he could secure the fulfilment of his desire two tasks would be set him, the first to shatter a small phial carried by a dove in its beak without injuring the bird, the second to obtain the skin of a three-headed dragon. She also provided him with a magic bow wherewith to perform the first labour, and with two hairs from the dragon's head, by means of which he would be magically guided to the monster's lair. Arrived there he should glut it with a meal of earth which he was to carry with him, and then slay it as it slept.

Thus forewarned and forearmed the prince set out and passing through a cave, of which the witch had told him, came to the palace. The Mistress having enquired of him his errand at once set him to perform the two tasks. These he accomplished, and she returned with him as his wife to his own land. But they did not live peaceably together, and one day the Mistress

[1] Above, p. 53.

[2] Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. no. VII.

of earth and sea in her anger bade the waters overflow the whole land, so that all mankind was drowned while she herself hovered above in the air and looked on. Then when the waters subsided, she descended to the earth and made new men by sowing stones; and thereafter she ruled again as before over the whole world.'

Both these stories hail, as does the song of which a few lines are cited above, from Zacynthos, and there is therefore good reason for believing that in that island the same 'Mistress' was recently acknowledged as at this very day is venerated in those parts of the mainland which I have mentioned.

Taking the common factors in these several traditions and beliefs, we are led at once to identify the goddess to whom they relate with Demeter.

First, the simplest form of her title, ἡ δέσποινα, of which the others are merely elaborations, is that which Demeter commonly shared with Persephone in old time; and that the title has been handed down from antiquity is shown clearly by the fact that the word is in ordinary usage obsolete. Since then it is unlikely that in the course of tradition such a title should be transferred (save, owing to Christian influence, in the case of the Virgin, who has locally no doubt superseded one of the goddesses twain and appropriated her byname), the word itself declares in favour of the identification of this still living deity with Demeter.

Secondly, her dwelling-place is consistently in the modern accounts the heart of a mountain, and the passage to it a cave. Such precisely, according to Pausanias, was the habitation of Demeter in Mt Elaïon[1]; and the same idea is reflected in her whole cult; for, though in the classical period she had temples built like those of other deities, yet her holy of holies, as befitted a Chthonian deity, was always a subterranean hall (*μέγαρον*) or palace (*ἀνάκτορον*), an artificial and glorified cavern.

Thirdly, the modern deity is in character benevolent, therein differing markedly from many of the pagan powers whom we have yet to consider and also from several of the Christian saints. Once only, in the second of the stories from Zacynthos, does she appear in angry mood, when she destroys all mankind by a flood. To the actual means of destruction employed too much

[1] Paus. VIII. 42. 1 ff.

importance must not be attached. The *motif* of the flood is common in modern Greek folk-tales. In the islands of the Aegean I encountered it several times, the fullest version being one which I heard in Scyros. The story as told there was exactly that of Deucalion, save that in deference to biblical tradition he was named Noah and, by a slight anachronism, it was the Panagia instead of Themis who counselled him to create fresh men by throwing stones over his shoulder. I was also taken to see the place where the flood was at its highest, a narrow glen through which runs a small stream, whose high sloping banks are certainly a mass of half-fossilised animal and vegetable matter; and I was escorted to the hill-top on which Noah's caïque finally rested. Such a theme is easily worked into a story of the deity, usually benevolent though she be, who is 'Mistress of the earth and of the sea'; and apart from the means of punishment so appropriately adopted by a goddess who rules the sea, this single outburst of somewhat unreasonable anger on the part of the modern deity against all mankind is singularly like the old-time Demeter's resentful retirement into the depths of her cave, until 'all the produce of earth was failing and the human race was perishing fast from famine[1].' Yet, otherwise the ancient goddess too was benevolent and gracious to man.

Fourthly, in Aetolia at any rate and probably also in the Peloponnese, where however I failed to extract definite information, the modern goddess is the quickener of all the fruits of the earth, and in functions therefore corresponds once more with the ancient conception of Demeter. On these grounds the identification seems to me certain.

This being granted, the permanence of tradition concerning the dwelling-place of Demeter raises a question which I approach with diffidence, feeling that an answer to it must rest with others more competent than myself in matters archaeological. First, is the tradition as old as that of the personality of the goddess? It is hard to suppose otherwise; for the primitive mind would scarcely conceive of a person without assigning also an habitation; and the habitation actually assigned is of primitive enough character—a cave in a mountain-side. Where then was Demeter worshipped by the Pelasgians in the Mycenaean age? That she was a deity

[1] Paus. VIII. 42. 2.

much reverenced by the dwellers in the Argive plain is certain; small idols believed to represent Demeter Kourotrophos have been found at Mycenae[1]; others, of which the identification is more certain, at Tiryns[2]; and at Argos, in later times, Demeter continued to be worshipped under the title Pelasgian[3]. Was a mere cavern then her only home? Or did Mycenae lavish some of its gold on building her a more worthy temple? May not the famous bee-hive structures which have passed successively for treasuries and for tombs of princes prove to be *μέγαρα*, temples of Chthonian deities such as Demeter?

It is true that in some humbler structures of the same type, such as those at Menídi and Thoricus, clear evidences of inhumation have been found; but I question whether it is permissible to draw from this fact the inference that those magnificent structures also, the so-called Treasuries of Atreus and of Minyas, were in reality tombs. It would seem reasonable to suppose that dwelling-places for the dead beneath the earth and for earth-deities may have been constructed on the same plan, but that the abodes dedicated to immortals were more imposing than those destined for dead men. This hypothesis appears to me more consistent with the evidence of the actual sites at Mycenae and Orchomenos than the commonly accepted view that the inner chamber of the 'Treasury of Atreus' was a place of burial. 'In the centre of the Mycenaean chamber,' says Schuchhardt[4], 'there is an almost circular depression three feet in diameter and two feet in depth, cut into the rocky ground. In spite of its unusual shape, we must recognise in it the actual site of the grave.' Was it a royal posture to lie curled up like a cat? And if so, what of a similar depression in the floor of the 'Treasury of Minyas' at Orchomenos? 'Almost in the centre of the treasure-room'—I again quote Schuchhardt[5]—'was a long hole in the level rock, nine inches deep, fifteen inches broad and nineteen inches long, which'—must be recognised as the sepulchre of a royal baby? No, our faith is not to be so severely taxed;—'which must have served to secure some monument.' May we not, with more consistency, extend the same explanation to Mycenae? And what then were

[1] Schuchhardt, *Schliemann's Excavations* (tr. Sellers), p. 296.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] Paus. II. 22. 1. [4] *op. cit.* p. 147.
[5] *op. cit.* p. 302.

the monuments? May they not have been images of the deity set up in the most natural place, the centre of the outer or the inner sanctuary?

Again, the actual shape of the buildings is important. Ethnologists tell us that it is ultimately derived from a type of dwelling commonly occupied by primitive man, a circular wattle-hut with conical top; or even more directly, as some would have it, from a similarly shaped abode which the ancient Phrygians used to excavate in the ground, constructing the top of withies laced over beams converging to the apex and covered over with earth, while they tunnelled out an approach from one side where the ground sloped conveniently away[1]. From this it is argued that the domed chambers of Mycenae must be tombs, on the ground that 'men in all ages have fashioned the dwellings of the dead in accordance with those of the living; but the dead are conservative, and long after a new generation has sought a new home and a new pattern for its houses, the habitations of the dead are still constructed in ancestral fashion[2].' I readily admit conservatism in all religious matters; but how does the argument touch Mycenae? Archaeologists, and among them Schuchhardt himself[3], are agreed that the shaft-graves in the citadel are earlier in date than the bee-hive structures of the lower town. There was therefore a breach in the continuity of the ancestral fashion. Reversion to a disused fashion is a very different thing from conservatism in upholding an unbroken usage.

But even supposing that there were good evidence of the uninterrupted continuity of this type of sepulchre, may not the temples of Chthonian deities have been built on the same plan? The use of the old word *μέγαρον* suggests that the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone, though subterranean, was modelled on the dwellings of men, and, to borrow an argument, religious conservatism may well have preserved for the gods' abodes the hut-like shape of primitive man's dwellings long after a new type of house had become general among mortals. Concrete instances of this actually existed in much later times[4]. In Rome the temple of Vesta was of this primitive shape, and so also

[1] Schuchhardt, *op. cit.* p. 151, and Leaf's introduction, p. xxvii. Cf. Frazer in *Journal of Philology*, xiv. 145 ff.
[2] Schuchhardt, *op. cit.* p. 151.
[3] *op. cit.* p. 303.
[4] Frazer in *Journal of Philology*, xiv. pp. 145 ff.

most probably was the Prytaneum of Athens, which, though not a temple, contained the sacred hearth of the whole community and a statue of Hestia[1]. Demeter then, as one of the deities of primitive Greece, might well have been provided with a temple constructed on the same primitive pattern as that of Vesta, but subterranean, as would befit a Chthonian deity, and thus analogous to the cave wherein she had been wont to dwell. The large domed chamber would be her *megaron*, wherein her worshippers assembled just as guests assembled in the *megaron* of a prince. The small square apartment, where such exists, opening on one side of the main room, might be the παστάς or 'bedchamber,' an inner sanctuary which temples of later ages also possessed. The approach or 'dromos' would represent the natural cave which had given access to her fabled palace in the bowels of the earth.

Finally, on such a view of these buildings, it would not be difficult to explain Pausanias' belief that they were treasuries[2]. Treasuries only, we may be sure, they were not; for they would not have been built outside the walls of the citadel. But temples in later times were used as depositories for treasure; the would-be thief shrank apparently from the further crime of sacrilege; and it is not unlikely that in a more primitive age, when superstitious awe was certainly no less strong, while robbery far from being a crime was an honourable calling, men should have secured their treasure by storing it in some inviolable sanctuary. Indeed it may be to such a custom that Homer alludes in speaking of 'all that the stone threshold of the archer, even Phoebus Apollo, doth enclose within at rocky Pytho[3].' If then this practice prevailed in Mycenaean, as it did in later, times, Pausanias would be recording a tradition which was partially right; and it is not hard to see how, when Mycenae's greatness had suddenly, as it seems, declined and her population perhaps had migrated for the most part to Argos, later generations, familiar in their new settlements with that different type of temple only which afterwards became general, might have forgotten the sacred character of the bee-hive structures and have remembered only the proverbial wealth once stored by the kings of Mycenae within them.

There remains one point to which I may for the moment direct attention here, reserving the development of the religious idea

[1] Paus. I. 18. 3. [2] *Id.* IX. 36. [3] *Iliad* IX. 404–5.

contained in it for a later chapter. The main theme of the second of the stories from Zacynthos was the seeking of the Mistress in marriage by a young prince. Now if this story stood alone, it would not be right to lay much stress upon it; for the adventures of a young prince in search of some far-famed bride form the plot of numerous Greek folk-tales; and it would be possible to suppose that the real divine personality of the Mistress had been partially obscured in the popular memory before such a story became connected with her name. But the same *motif* as it happens is repeated in two stories, one Greek and the other Albanian, in von Hahn's collection[1]. The name of 'the Mistress' does not indeed occur; the deity is called in both 'the beautiful one of the earth[2].' But her identity is made quite clear in the Albanian story, which evidently must have been borrowed from the Greek and is therefore admissible as good evidence, by the mention of 'a three-headed dog that sleeps not day nor night' by which she is guarded. This is undoubtedly the same monster as the hero of the Zacynthian story was required to kill—the three-headed snake; and while the Albanian story, in making the beast a guardian of the subterranean abode whom the adventurer must slay before he can reach 'the beautiful one,' is better in construction and, incidentally, more faithful to old tradition[3] than the Greek version which makes the slaying an useless task arbitrarily imposed, yet in both portraits of the monster we can recognise Cerberus—half dog, half snake. But of him more anon; 'the beautiful one of the earth' whom he guards can be none other than Persephone.

Thus there are three modern stories which record the winning of Demeter or Persephone in marriage by a mortal lover. Is this a relic of ancient tradition? There was the attempt of Pirithous to seize Persephone for his wife; but that failed, and moreover was judged an impious deed for which he must suffer punishment. Yet there is also the story of Iasion who was deemed worthy of Demeter's love. Wedlock then even with so great a deity as Demeter or her daughter was not beyond mortals' dream or reach.

[1] *Griech. und Albanesische Märchen*, nos. 63 and 97.

[2] 'die Schöne der Erde' in von Hahn's translation. Unfortunately the original does not appear in Pio's Νεοελληνικὰ παραμύθια, for which the MSS. of von Hahn provided the material.

[3] Cf. Plut. *Vita Thes.* 31, *ad fin.*

Thus much I may notice now; when I come to examine more closely the ancient worship of these goddesses, I shall argue that the idea of a marriage-union between them and human kind was the most intimate secret of the mysteries, and that in such folk-tales as those which I have here mentioned is contained the germ of a religious conception from which was once evolved the holiest of ancient sacraments.

## § 6. Charon.

There is no ancient deity whose name is so frequently on the lips of the modern peasant as that of Charon. The forms which it has now assumed are two, Χάρος and Χάροντας, analogous to the formations γέρος and γέροντας from the ancient γέρων: for in late Greek at any rate the declension of Χάρων followed that of γέρων[1]. The two forms do not seem to belong to different modern dialects, for they often appear in close juxtaposition in the same folk-song. The shorter form however is the commoner in every-day speech, and I shall therefore employ it.

About Charos the peasants will always, according to my experience, converse freely. Neither superstitious awe nor fear of ridicule imposes any restraint. They feel perhaps that the existence of Charos is one of the stern facts which men must face; and even the more educated classes retain sometimes, I think, an instinctive fear of making light of his name, lest he should assert his reality. For Charos is Death. He is not now, what classical literature would have him to be, merely the ferryman of the Styx. He is the god of death and of the lower world.

Hades is no longer a person but a place, the realm over which Charos rules. But the change which has befallen the old monarch's name is the only change in the Greek conception of that realm. It is still called 'the lower world' (ὁ κάτω κόσμος or ἡ κάτω γῆ), and even the name Tartarus (now τὰ Τάρταρα, with the addition frequently of τῆς γῆς) still may be heard. Nor is the character of the place altered. Its epithet 'icy-cold,'

[1] For references see Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugr.* p. 222.

*κρυοπαγωμένος*, is well-nigh as constant in modern folk-songs as was the equivalent *κρυερός* in Homer's allusions to Hades' house, while the picturesque word *ἀραχνιασμένος*, 'thick with spiders'-webs,' repeats in thought the Homeric *εὐρωείς*, 'mouldering.' Such is Charos' kingdom, and hither he conveys men's souls which he has snatched away from earth.

Here with him dwells his mother, a being, as one folk-song tells[1], more pitiful than he, who entreats him sometimes, when he is setting out to the chase, to spare mothers with young children and not to part lovers new-wed. He has also a wife, Charóntissa or Chárissa, who as the name itself implies is merely a feminine counterpart of himself without any distinct character of her own. A son of Charos is also mentioned in song, for whose wedding-feast 'he slays children instead of lambs and brides as fatlings[2],' and to whose keeping are entrusted the counter-keys of Hades[3]. Adopted children are also counted among his family, but these are of those whom he has carried from this world to his own home[4]. The household is completed by the three-headed watch-dog, of whom however remembrance is very rare. Yet in two stories in the last section we recognised Cerberus, and even the less convincing of the embodiments there presented, that which represented him as a three-headed snake rather than dog, is not devoid of traces of ancient tradition. The hero who would slay the monster has to cross a piece of water—the sea instead of the river Styx—in order to reach an island where is the monster's lair; and there arrived, he sees 'looking out from a hole three heads with eyes that flash fire and jaws that breathe flames[5].' This is Cerberus without doubt; and if the story calls him 'serpent' rather than 'dog,' ancient mythology and art alike justify in part the description; for his mother was said to be Echidna, and he himself is found pourtrayed with the tail of a serpent and a ring of snakes about his neck. Schmidt himself appears to have overlooked the testimony of this story and of that also from the collection of von Hahn in which, as I have pointed out, we have a modern picture of Cerberus

[1] Passow, *Popul. Carm. Graeciae recentioris.* Carm. no. 408.
[2] Χασιώτης, *Συλλογὴ τῶν κατὰ τὴν Ἤπειρον δημοτικῶν ἀσμάτων*, p. 169.
[3] Passow, *op. cit.* no. 423.
[4] Πολίτης, *Μελέτη ἐπὶ τοῦ βίου τῶν νεωτέρων Ἑλλήνων*, p. 290.
[5] Bernhard Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. p. 81.

guarding the realm of Persephone; for he speaks of some remarkable lines from a song which he himself heard in Zacynthos as an unique mention of Cerberus, and questions the genuine nature of the tradition. All doubt is however removed by the corroborative evidence contained in the two stories already mentioned and by the fact that a three-headed dog belonging to Charos was recently heard of by a traveller in Macedonia[1]. The lines themselves are put in the mouth of Charos:—

Ἔχω ὀχτρὸ ἐγὼ σκυλί, π' οὔλους μας μᾶς φυλάει,
κὴ ἄντας με ἰδῇ ταράζεται καὶ θέλει νά με φάῃ.
εἶναι σκυλὶ τρικέφαλο, ποῦ καίει σὰ φωτία,
ἔχει τὰ νύχια πουντερὰ καὶ τὴν ὠρὰ μακρύα.
βγάνει φωτιὰ 'φ' τὰ μάτια του, ἀπὸ τὸ στόμα λάβρα,
ἡ γλῶσσα του εἶναι μακρυά, τὰ δόντια του εἶναι μαῦρα[2].

'A savage dog have I, who guards us all, and when he sees me he rages and fain would devour me. A three-headed dog is he, and he burns like fire; his claws are sharp and his tail is long; from his eyes he gives forth flame and from his mouth burning heat; long is his tongue and grim his teeth.'

Here at least recognition of Cerberus must be immediate; every detail of the description, save for the characteristically modern touch which makes Charos afraid of his own dog, is in accord with classical tradition.

Such is the household of Charos, so far as a description may be compiled from a few scattered allusions; his own portrait varies more, in proportion as there are more numerous attempts in every part of Greece to draw it. Sometimes he is depicted as an old man, tall and spare, white of hair and harsh of feature; but more often he is a lusty warrior, with locks of raven-black or gleaming gold—just as Hades in old time was sometimes *κυανοχαίτης*, sometimes *ξανθός*,—who rides forth on his black steed by highway or lonely path to slay and to ravage: 'his glance is as lightning and his face as fire, his shoulders are like twin mountains and his head like a tower[3].' His raiment is usually black as befits the lord of death, but anon it is depicted bright as his sunlit hair[4], for though he brings death he is a god and glorious.

[1] Kindly communicated to me by Mr G. F. Abbott, author of *Macedonian Folklore*.
[2] B. Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. Song no. 39.
[3] Cf. Passow, no. 428.
[4] *Ibid.* no. 430.

His functions are clearly defined. He visits this upper world to carry off those whose allotted time has run, and guards them in the lower world as in a prison whose keys they vainly essay to steal and to escape therefrom. But the spirit in which he performs those duties varies according as he is conceived to be a free agent responsible to none or merely a minister of the supreme God. Which of these is the true conception is a question to which the common-folk as a whole have given no final answer; and the character of Charos consequently depends upon the view locally preferred.

Those who regard him as simply the servant and messenger of God, find no difficulty in accommodating him to his Christian surroundings; for, as I have said, the peasant does not distinguish between the Christian and the pagan elements in his faith which together make his polytheism so luxuriant. We have already seen Charos' name with the prefix of 'saint[1]'; and though this Christian title is not often accorded him, yet his name appears commonly on tomb-stones in Christian churchyards. At Leonídi, on the east coast of the Peloponnese, I noted the couplet:

*καὶ μένα δὲν λυπήθηκε ὁ Χάρος νά με πάρῃ,*
*ποῦ εἴμουνα τοῦ οἴκου μου μονάκριβο βλαστάρι.*

'Me too Charos pitied not but took, even me the fondly-cherished flower of my home.'

So too in popular story and song he is represented as working in concord with the Angels and Archangels, to whom sometimes falls the task of carrying children to his realm[2]. Indeed one of the archangels, Michael, who as we saw above has ousted Hermes, the escorter of souls, and assumed his functions, is charged with exactly the same duties as Charos in the conveyance of men's souls to the nether world, so that in popular parlance the phrases 'he is wrestling with Charos' (*παλεύει μὲ τὸ Χάρο*)[3] and 'he is struggling with an angel' (*ἀγγελομαχεῖ*)[4] are both alike used of a man in his death-agony.

[1] Above, p. 53.
[2] *e.g.* Passow, no. 427.
[3] Cf. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 230.
[4] This expression which I have heard several times is not noticed by Schmidt or Polites. They give, however, *ἀγγελοκρούεται*, 'he is being stricken by an angel,' and other phrases meaning to see, to fear, to be carried away by, an angel, all in the same sense. See Schmidt, *op. cit.* 181, and Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. 308.

This Christianised conception of Charos has not been without influence in softening the lines of the character popularly ascribed to him. The duties imposed upon him by the will of God are sometimes repugnant to him, and he would willingly spare those whom he is sent to slay. One folk-story related to me exhibits him even as a friend of man:—

'Once upon a time there were a man and wife who had had seven children all of whom died in infancy. When an eighth was born, the father betook himself to a witch and enquired of her how he might best secure the boy's life. She told him that the others had died because he had chosen unsuitable godparents, and bade him on this occasion ask the first man whom he should meet on his way home to stand sponsor for the child. He accordingly departed, and straightway met a stranger riding on a black horse, and made his request to him. The stranger consented, and the baptism at once took place; but no sooner was it over than he was gone without so much as telling his name.

Ten years passed, and the child was growing up strong and healthy. Then at last the father again encountered the unknown stranger, and reproached him with having been absent so long without ever making enquiry after his godson. Then the stranger answered, "Better for thee if I had not now come and if thou neededst not now learn my name. I am Charos, and because I am thy friend[1], am come to warn thee that thy days are well-nigh spent." Thereupon Charos led him away to a cave in the mountain-side, and they entered and came to a chamber where were many candles burning. Then said Charos, "See, these candles are the lives of men, and yonder are thine and thy son's." Then the man looked, and of his own candle there were but two inches left, but his son's was tall and burnt but slowly. Then he besought Charos to light yet another candle for him ere his own were burnt away, but Charos made answer that that could not be. Then again he besought him to give him ten years from the life of his son, for he was a poor man, and if he died ere his son were grown to manhood, his widow and orphan would be in want. But Charos answered, "In no way can the decreed length of life be changed. Yet will I show thee how in the two years that

[1] κουμπάρος. The word expresses the relationship in which a godfather stands to the parents of his godson.

yet remain to thee thou mayest enrich thyself and leave abundant store for thy wife and child. Thou shalt become a physician. It matters not that thou knowest nought of medicine, for I will give thee a better knowledge than of drugs. Thine eyes shall ever be open to see me; and when thou goest to a sick man's couch, if thou dost see me standing at the bed-head, know then that he must die, and say to them that summoned thee that no skill can save him; but if thou dost see me at the foot of the bed, know that he will recover; give him therefore but pills of bread if thou wilt, and promise to restore him." Then did the man thank Charos, and went away to his home.

Now it chanced that the only daughter of the king lay grievously sick, and all the doctors and magicians had been called to heal her, but they availed nothing. Then came the poor man whom Charos had taught, and went into the room where the princess lay, and lo! Charos stood at the foot of her bed. Then he bade the king send away the other physicians, for that he alone could heal her. So he himself went home and mixed flour and water and came again and gave it to the king's daughter, and soon she was recovered of her sickness. Then the king gave him a great present, and his fame was spread abroad, and many resorted to him, and soon he was rich.

Thus two years passed, and at the end thereof he himself lay sick. And he looked and saw Charos standing at the head of his bed. Then he bade his wife turn the bed about, but it availed nothing; for Charos again stood at his head, and caught him by the hair, and he opened his mouth to cry out, and Charos drew forth his soul[1].'

Again the unwillingness of Charos to execute the harsh decrees of God is illustrated in numerous folk-songs. Most often it is some brave youth, shepherd or warrior, a lover of the open air, who excites his compassion; for the same notes of regret which Sophocles made melodious in the farewell of Ajax to the sunlight, to his house in Salamis, even to the streams and springs of the Trojan land which brought his death, ring clear and true

[1] This story, as I have told it, is not a literal translation, for I could not take down the original. But notes which I set down after hearing it enable me to reproduce it in a form which certainly contains the whole substance and many actual phrases of the version which I heard.

in modern folk-song too from the lips of dying warriors. Such were the last words of the outlaw-patriot (κλέφτης) Zedros:

'Farewell, Olympus, now farewell, and all the mountain-summits,
Farewell, my strongholds desolate, and plane-trees rich in shadow,
Ye fountains with your waters cool, and level plains low-lying.
Farewell I bid the swift-winged hawks[1], farewell the royal eagles,
Farewell for me the sun I love and the bright-glancing moonlight,
That lighted up my path wherein to walk a warrior worthy[2].'

Such laments are not lost upon Charos, the servant of God, but he must needs turn a deaf ear to prayers for a respite. Clear and final comes his answer, almost in the same words in every ballad[3],

δὲν ἠμπορῶ, λεβέντη μου, γιατ' εἶμαι προσταμμένος,
ἐμένα μ' ἔστειλ' ὁ Θεὸς νὰ πάρω τὴ ψυχή σου.

'No respite can I give, brave sir, for I am straitly chargèd;
'Tis God that sent me here to thee, sent me to take thy spirit.'

Sometimes then the doomed man will seek to tempt Charos with meat and drink, that he may grant a few hours' delay, but against offers of hospitality he is obdurate. Or again his victim refuses to yield to death 'without weakness or sickness' and challenges him to a trial of athletic skill, in wrestling or leaping, whereon each shall stake his own soul. And to this Charos sometimes gives consent, for he knows that he will win. So they make their way to the 'marble-paved threshing-floor,' the arena of all manly pursuits; and there the man perchance leaps forty cubits, yet Charos surpasses him by five; or they wrestle together from morn till eve, but at the last bout Charos is victor. One hero indeed is known to fame, whose exploits make him the Heracles of modern Greece, Digenes the Cyprian, who wrestled with Charos for three nights and days and was not vanquished. But then 'there came a voice from God and from the Archangels, "Charos, I sent thee not to engage in wrestlings, but that thou should'st carry off souls for me[4]."' And at that rebuke Charos transformed himself into an eagle and alighted on the hero's head and plucked out his soul.

[1] Probably meaning the brigand's 'comrades.' The term ξεφτέρι, 'hawk,' is commonly so applied.
[2] Πολίτης, *op. cit.* p. 246 (from Λελέκης, Δημοτ. ἀνθολ. p. 57).
[3] *e.g.* Passow, *Popul. Carm.* nos. 426—429.
[4] Σακελλάριος, Κυπριακά, vol. III. p. 48. Cf. Πολίτης, *op. cit.* p. 239.

The other and more pagan conception of Charos excludes all traits of kindness and mercy; and men do not stint the expression of their hatred of him. He is 'black,' 'bitter,' 'hateful' (μαῦρος[1], πικρός, στυγερός). He is the merciless potentate of the nether world, independent of the God of heaven, equally powerful in his own domain, but more terrible, more inexorable: for his work is death and his abode is Hades. Thence he issues forth at will, as a hunter to the chase. 'Against the wounds that Charos deals herbs avail not, physicians give no cure, nor saints protection[2].' His quarry is the soul of man; 'where he finds three, he takes two of them, and where he finds two, takes one, and where he finds but one alone, him too he takes[3].' Sometimes he is enlarging his palace, and he takes the young and strong to be its pillars; sometimes he is repairing the tent in which he dwells, and uses the stout arms of heroes for tent-pegs and the tresses of bright-haired maidens for the ropes; sometimes he is laying out a garden, and he gathers children from the earth to be the flowers of it and young men to be its tall slim cypresses; more rarely he is a vintager, and tramples men in his vat that their blood may be his red wine, or again he carries a sickle and reaps a human harvest.

But most commonly he is the warrior preëminent in all manner of prowess—archer, wrestler, horseman. Once a bride boasted that she had no fear of Charos, for that her brothers were men of valour and her husband a hero; then came Charos and shot an arrow at her, and her beauty faded; a second and a third arrow, and he stretched her on her death-bed[4]. Often in the pride of strength have young warriors laughed Charos to scorn; then has he come to seize the strongest of them, and though the warrior strain and struggle as in a wrestling-match, yet Charos wearies not but wins the contest by fair means or foul: for he is no honourable foe, but dishonest above thieves, more deceitful than women[5]: he seizes his adversary by the hair and drags him down to Hades. Even more striking is the picture of Charos as horseman riding forth on his black steed to the

[1] The word for 'black' includes the sense of 'grim,' 'gloomy,' 'sorrowful. Tears are commonly described as 'black,' μαῦρα δάκρυα.

[2] Passow, *op. cit.* distich no. 1155.

[3] Cf. Passow, no. 408.

[4] Cf. Passow, nos. 414, 415, 417.

[5] Passow, no. 424.

foray, and it is this conception which has inspired one of the finest achievements of the popular muse:—

> Why stand the mountains black and sad, their brows enwrapped in darkness?
> Is it a wind that buffets them? is it a storm that lashes?
> No, 'tis no wind that buffets them, nor 'tis no storm that lashes;
> But 'tis great Charos passing by, and the dead passing with him.
> He drives the young men on before, he drags the old behind him,
> And at his saddle-bow are ranged the helpless little children.
> The children cling and cry to him, the old men call beseeching,
> "Good Charos, at some hamlet halt, halt at some cooling fountain;
> There let the young men heave the stone, the old men drink of water,
> There let the little children go agathering pretty posies."
> "No, not at hamlet will I halt, nor yet at cooling fountain,
> Lest mothers come draw water there and know their little children,
> Lest wife and husband meet again and there be no more parting."

Such is the more pagan presentment of the modern Charos, a tyrant as absolute in his own realm as God in heaven, a veritable Ζεὺς ἄλλος[1] as was Hades of old, but hard of heart, heedless of prayer, delighting in cruelty.

At first sight then the Charos of modern Greece would seem to have little in common with the Charon of ancient Greece beyond the name and some connexion with death: and Fauriel, in the introduction to his collection of popular songs, pronounces the opinion that in this case the usual tendencies of tradition have been reversed, in that it is the name that has survived, while the attributes have been changed[2]. To this judgement I cannot subscribe. I suspect that in ancient times the literary presentation of Charon was far more circumscribed than the popular, and that out of a profusion of imaginative portraitures as varied as those seen in the folk-songs of to-day one aspect of Charon became accepted among educated men as the correct and fashionable presentment. Hades was, in literature, the despot of the lower world, and for Charon no place could be found save that of ferryman. But this, I think, was only one out of the many guises in which the ancient Charon was figured by popular imagination; for at the present day the remnants of such a conception are small, in spite of the fact that there has remained a custom which should have kept it alive—the custom of putting a coin in the mouth of the dead.

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 237.
[2] Fauriel, *Chants populaires de la Grèce Moderne, Discours préliminaire*, p. 85.

Only in one folk-song, recorded from Zacynthos, can I find the old literary representation of Charon as ferryman of the Styx unmistakably reproduced. The following is a literal rendering:—'Across the river that none may ford Charos was passing, and one soul was on the bank and gave him greeting. "Good Charos, long life to thee, well-beloved; take me, even me, with thee, take me, dear Charos! A poor man's soul was I, even of a poor man and a beggar; men left me destitute and I perished for lack of a crumb of barley-bread. No last rites did they give me, they gave me none, poor soul, not even a farthing in my mouth for thee who dost await me. Poor were my children, poor and without hope; destitute were they and lay in death unburied, poor souls. Them thou did'st take, good Charos, them thou did'st take, I saw thee, when thy cold hand seized them by the hair. Take me too, Charos, take me, take me, poor soul; take me yonder, take me yonder, no other waiteth for thee." Thus cried to him the poor man's soul, and Charos made answer, "Come, soul, thou art good, and God hath pitied thee." Then took he the soul and set her on the other bank, and spreading then his sail he sped far away[1].'

In another song[2] of the same collection, hailing also from Zacynthos, there may be a reminiscence of the same old tradition. In it Charos has a caïque with black sails and black oars and goes to and fro—whence and whither is not told—with cargoes of the dead. But more probably the imagery is borrowed from seafaring; the Greek peasant would hardly imagine a caïque plying on a river; the streams of his own country will seldom carry even a small bark. A sea-voyage on the other hand is, especially in the imagination of islanders, the most natural method of departure to a far-off country. From the sea certainly comes the metaphor in a funeral dirge from Zacynthos in which the mourner asks of the dead,

σὲ τὶ καράβι θὰ βρεθῇς καὶ 'σ τὶ πόρτο θ' ἀράξῃς;[3]

'In what boat wilt thou be and at what haven wilt thou land?'

This too is claimed by Schmidt[4] as a reminiscence of

[1] Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. Song no. 38.
[2] *Ibid.* no. 37.
[3] Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. Song no. 7.
[4] *Das Volksleben*, p. 237.

Charon's ferry — somewhat unfortunately; for the next line continues,

*γιὰ νἄρθῃ ἡ μανοῦλα σου νά σε ξαναγοράσῃ,*

'That thy mother may come and ransom thee again.'

Now in another dirge[1] also heard by Schmidt in the same island, this idea is worked out even more fully: the mother cries to the master of the ship that bears away her lost son not to sell him, and offers high ransom for him; but the dead man in answer bids her keep her treasure; 'not till the crow doth whiten and become a dove, must thou, mother mine, look for me again.' Clearly the imagery is borrowed not from the ferry-boat of Charon plying for hire, but from a descent of pirates who carry men off to hold them to ransom or to sell them for slaves. In neither dirge is Charos actually named, but doubtless he is understood to be the captain of the pirates; for in more than one dirge of Laconia and Maina he is explicitly called *κουρσάρος*, a corsair[2].

Here then we have yet another presentation of the modern Charos; but of Charon the ferryman there is no sure remembrance except in one song from Zacynthos. Nor again, save in that one song, is the river of death imagined as an impassable barrier; it is rather a stream of Lethe: no boatman is needed to carry the dead across; but mention is made only of 'the loved ones, that pass the river and drink the water thereof, and forget their homes and their orphan children[3]'—just as in the mountains there are 'springs in marble grots, whereat the wild sheep drink and remember no more their lambs[4].' It is the drinking of the water, not the passing of the stream, which frees the dead from aching memories: the picture is wholly different from that of a river which cannot be crossed but by grace of the ferryman.

The general oblivion into which the ancient conception of Charon has fallen is the more remarkable, as I have said, in view of the survival of a custom which in antiquity was closely associated with it. In parts of Macedonia, Thrace, and Asia Minor the practice prevails[5], or till recently prevailed, of placing in the mouth (or

[1] *Märchen* etc. Song no. 10.
[2] Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. p. 272.
[3] Passow, no. 371.
[4] Ἰατρίδης, Συλλογὴ δημοτ. ἀσμάτων, p. 17. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 236.
[5] So in some districts of Macedonia up to the present day; Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 193.

more rarely on the breast) of the dead a small coin, which in the environs of Smyrna is actually known as *τὸ περατίκι*, passage-money[1]. In the Cyclades and in parts of the Greek mainland I myself have met aged persons who could recall the existence of the custom: a century or two ago it was probably frequent. But there is less evidence that the coin was commonly intended for Charos. Protodikos indeed, the authority for the existence of the custom in Asia Minor, writing in 1860, says expressly that the coin was designed for Charos as ferryman; and the name of 'passage-money' locally given to the coin tends to confirm the statement of a writer whom I have found in some other matters inaccurate. Another authority[2] moreover, writing also in 1860, states that at Stenimachos in Thrace 'until a short time ago' the coin was laid in the mouth of the dead actually for Charos; nor can there be any question that the classical interpretation of the custom survived long in Zacynthos, as is evidenced by the complaint of the poor man's soul in the song translated above,

*'στερνὰ ἐμὲ δὲ μοῦδωκαν, δὲ μοῦδωκαν τσῆ καϋμένης,*
*μήτε λεφτὸ 'στὸ στόμα μου γιὰ σὲ ποῦ περιμένεις,*

'No last rites did they give me, they gave me none, poor soul, not even a farthing in my mouth for thee (Charos) who awaitest me.'

Yet Schmidt, who recorded these lines from Zacynthos, found that the actual custom was barely remembered there. He met indeed, in 1863, one old woman aged eighty-two, who as a child had known the practice of putting a copper in the mouth of the dead as also that of laying a key on the corpse's breast; but of the purpose of the coin she knew nothing; the key she believed to be useful for opening the gates of Paradise. For myself, though I have heard mention of the use of the coin, I have never known it to be associated with Charos. I incline therefore to the opinion that in most places where the custom is or has recently been practised, it has outlived the interpretation which was in classical times put upon it.

But was the classical interpretation a true index to the origin of the custom? Was it anything more than an aetiological

[1] *Πρωτόδικος, περὶ τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ταφῆς*, p. 14. The form *περατίκιον* which the writer gives can hardly be popular. It might be, as Schmidt points out, *περατίκιν* in the local dialect. I have given the form which the word would assume in most districts.

[2] *Σκορδέλης* in the periodical *Πανδώρα*, XI. p. 449. Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 238.

explanation of a custom whose significance even in an early age had already become obscured by lapse of time? One thing at least has been made certain by the modern study of folklore, namely that a custom may outlive not only the idea which gave it birth but even successive false ideas which it has itself engendered in the minds of men who have sought vainly to explain it. When therefore Lucian[1] stated that 'they put an obol in the dead man's mouth as boat-fare for the ferryman,' it is possible that he was recording a late and incorrect interpretation of a custom which had existed before the rôle of ferryman had ever been invented for Charon. Further if that interpretation had been in the main a literary figment, it would have been natural for the original meaning of the custom to be still remembered among the unlettered common-folk of outlying districts. There are plenty of cases in modern Greece in which different explanations of the same custom are offered in different localities. In spite therefore of the fact that one view only found expression in classical literature, there is no antecedent improbability in the supposition that an older view may have been handed down even to recent generations in the purer oral traditions of the common-folk.

Once only, from a fellow-traveller in the Cyclades, did I obtain any explanation at all of the use of the coin, *εἶναι καλὸ γιὰ τἀερικά*[2], 'it is useful because of the aërial ones.' This sounds vague enough, but nothing more save gestures of uncertainty could I elicit. Was the coin useful, in his view, as a fee to be paid to 'the aërial ones' on the soul's journey from this world to the next, or as a charm against the assaults of such beings? That was the question to which I sought an answer from him, but in vain. For myself I cannot determine in which sense the dark saying was actually meant. The former would accord well with one local belief of the present day, if only my informant had specified one particular kind of aërial beings who are believed to take toll of departing souls; but to this I shall return in a later section of this chapter[3]. The second interpretation of the words, however, whether they were intended in that sense by the speaker or not, furnishes what will be shown by other evidence to be the key to the origin of the custom.

[1] *περὶ πένθους*, § 10.
[2] For this term see above, p. 68, and below, p. 283.
[3] Below, p. 285.

A coin is often used as a charm against sinister influences[1]. In this case then it may have been a prophylactic against aërial spirits. Why then is it generally put in the dead man's mouth? Not, I think, because the mouth is a convenient purse, as seems to be assumed in the classical interpretation of the custom, but because the mouth is the entrance to the body. The peasants of to-day believe as firmly as men of the Homeric age that it is through the mouth that the soul escapes at death. The phrase *μὲ τὴ ψυχὴ 'στὰ δόντια*, 'with the soul between the teeth,' is the popular equivalent for 'at the last gasp'; and in the folk-songs the same idea constantly recurs; 'open thy mouth,' says Charos to a shepherd whom he has thrown in wrestling, 'open thy mouth that I may take thy soul[2].' Now the passage by which the soul makes its exit, is naturally the passage by which evil spirits (or the soul[3], if it should return,) would make their entrance; and, as we shall see later, there is a very real fear among the peasantry that a dead body may be entered and possessed by an evil spirit. Clearly then the mouth, by which the spirit would enter, is the right place in which to lay the protective coin.

The interpretation which I suggest gains support from some points in modern usage. In Macedonia, according to one traveller[4], the coin which formerly used to be laid in the corpse's mouth was Turkish and bore a text from the Koran, an aggravation of the pagan custom which was made a pretext for episcopal intervention[5]. Now clearly, if the coin had in that district been designed as payment for the services of Charos as ferryman, there would have been no motive for preferring one bearing an inscription from the Mohammedan scriptures, which assuredly could not enhance the coin's value in the eyes of Charos: but if the coin was itself employed as a charm against evil spirits, the sacred text might well have been deemed to add not a little to its prophylactic properties. Thus the character of the particular type of coin chosen indicates that the coin in itself too was at one time viewed as a charm; a charm moreover whose effect would be precisely

[1] See above, p. 13.

[2] Passow, no. 432.

[3] This is shown later to be the first form of the superstition. See below, pp. 433–4.

[4] Newton, *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant*, I. p. 289 (cited by Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 239).

[5] The use of the coin, quite apart from any such variation of the custom, was forbidden by several councils of the Church between the 4th and 7th centuries, cf. Πολίτης, Μελέτη etc. p. 269.

that of the key which in the island of Zacynthos was also laid upon the dead man's breast; for the key was certainly not designed, as Schmidt's informant would have it, to open the gates of Paradise, but, like any other piece of iron, served originally to scare away spirits. The use of a coin as well as of a key in that island was merely meant to make assurance doubly sure.

Again, in many places throughout Greece, where this use of a coin is no longer known, a substitute of more Christian character has been found. On the lips of the dead is laid either a morsel of consecrated bread from the Eucharist[1], or more commonly a small piece of pottery—a fragment it may be of any earthenware vessel—on which is incised the sign of the cross with the legend I. X. NI. KA. ('Jesus Christ conquers') in the four angles[2]. Here the choice of the inscribed words of itself seems to indicate the intention of barring the dead man's mouth against the entrance of evil spirits; and as final proof of my theory I find that in both Chios[3] and Rhodes[4], where a wholly or partially Christianised form of the custom prevails, the charm employed is definitely understood by the people to be a means of precaution against a devil entering the dead body and resuscitating it. Nor must the mention of a devil in this connexion be taken as evidence that the Chian and Rhodian interpretation of the custom is not ancient. I shall be able to show in a later chapter that the idea of a devil entering the corpse is only the Christian version of a pagan belief in a possible re-animation of the corpse by the soul[5].

But there is yet another variety of the custom, in which no coin and no Mohammedan nor Christian[6] symbol is used, but a charm whose magic properties were in repute long before Mohammed, long before Christ, probably long before coinage was known to Greece. Again a piece of pottery is used, but the symbol stamped upon it is the geometrical figure ✡, the

[1] Cf. Ricaud, *Annales des conciles généraux et particuliers* (1773), vol. I. p. 654 (from Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 269).

[2] According to Bent (*Cyclades*, p. 363) the object used thus in Naxos is a wax cross with the initial letters I. X. N. engraved upon it, and it still bears the old name ναῦλον, 'fare.'

[3] Κωνστ. Καπελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, pp. 335 and 339.

[4] Newton, *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant*, I. p. 212. The exact details of the custom in each place are given below, p. 406.

[5] See below, pp. 433–4.

[6] In Rhodes, according to Newton, *l.c.*, the Christian symbol I. X. N. K. is combined with that to which I now come, the 'pentacle.'

'pentacle' of mediaeval magic lore. In Greece it is now known as *τὸ πενταλφα*, but of its properties, beyond the fact that it serves as a charm[1], the people have nothing to say. In the mediaeval and probably in the yet earlier magic of Europe and the East it is one of the commonest figures, appearing sometimes as Solomon's seal, sometimes as the star which led the wise men to Bethlehem, sometimes, in black colouring, as a symbol of the principle of evil, and correspondingly, in white, as the symbol of the principle of good. But though the figure has been known to the magicians of many nations and many epochs, there is no reason to suppose that it is in recent times or from other races that the Greeks have learnt it: for it was known too by the ancient Greeks, who noted among its more intelligible properties the fact that the five lines composing it can be drawn without removing pencil from paper. The Pythagoreans, who called it the *πενταγραμμον*[2], are known to have attached to it some mystic value. There is a reasonable likelihood therefore that the symbol has been handed down in Greece as a magical charm—for we have seen how many other methods of magic have survived—from the time of Pythagoras. Further back we cannot penetrate; yet—*vixere fortes ante Agamemnona*, and there were professors of occult sciences before Pythagoras. Was it then he who first discovered the figure's mystic value? Or did he merely adopt and interpret in his own way a symbol which for long ages before him had been endowed with magical powers? Was it perhaps this figure, graven on some broken potsherd, which long before coinage supplied a more ready charm protected the corpse from possession by evil spirits, or rather, in those days, from reanimation by the soul? Who shall say? The belief, which has found its modern expression in the engraving of Christian or Mohammedan texts on prophylactic coins or pottery and in barring with them the door of the lips which gives access to the corpse, is certainly primitive enough in character to date from the dimmest prehistoric age.

If my suggestion as to the origin of the custom is correct, it was only the accident of a coin being commonly used as the

[1] Cf. Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. 573, where it is said that in Myconos the symbol is sometimes carved on house doors to keep *vrykolakes* (on which see below, cap. IV.) from troubling the inmates at night.

[2] Cf. Lucian, *ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἐν τῇ προσαγορεύσει πταίσματος*, 5.

prophylactic charm, which caused the classical association of the custom with Charon; and, once disembarrassed of this association, the popular conception of Charon in antiquity is more easily studied.

The literary presentation of him in the guise of a ferryman only is a comparatively late development. The early poets know nothing of him whatever in any character. The first literary reference to him was apparently in the *Minyad*, an epic poem of doubtful but not early date, of which two lines referring to the descent of Theseus and Pirithous to the lower world ran thus: 'There verily the ship whereon the dead embark, even that which the aged Charon as ferryman doth guide, they found not at its anchorage[1].' These are the lines by which Pausanias believed that Polygnotus had been guided when painting the figure of Charon in his famous representation of the nether world at Delphi. Thenceforth this was the one orthodox presentation of Charon in both literature and art. Euripides and Aristophanes in numerous passages[2] both alike conform to it, and the painters of funeral vases were equally faithful.

But there is evidence to show that this was not the popular conception of Charon, or at any rate not the whole of it. Phrases occur (and were probably current in classical times) which seem to imply a larger conception of Charon's office and functions. The 'door of Charon' (Χαρώνειος θύρα[3] or Χαρώνειον[4]) was that by which condemned prisoners were led out to execution. The 'staircase of Charon' (Χαρώνειος κλίμαξ[5]) was that by which ghosts in drama ascended to the stage, as if they were appearing from the nether world. To Charon likewise were ascribed in popular parlance many caverns of forbidding aspect, particularly those that were filled with mephitic vapours—Χαρώνεια βάραθρα[6], σπήλαια[7], ἄντρα[8]. Finally Χαρωνῖται is Plutarch's[9] rendering of the Latin *Orcini*, the *sobriquet* given to the low persons whom Caesar brought up into the Senate. These uses point to a popular conception of Charon larger than classical art and literature reveal, and justify Suidas' simple identification of Charon with death[10].

[1] apud Pausan. x. 28. 1.
[2] *e.g.* Eur. *Alc.* 252, 361, *Heracl.* 432, Arist. *Ran.* 184 ff., *Lysistr.* 606, *Plut.* 278.
[3] Suidas s.v.
[4] Pollux, 8, 102.
[5] Pollux, 4, 132.
[6] Strabo, 579.
[7] *Ibid.* 636.
[8] *Ibid.* 649.
[9] Plut. *Anton.* 16.
[10] Χάρων θάνατος, s.v.

Moreover once in Euripides, for all his strict adherence to the conventional literary characterisation of Charon, a glimpse of popular thought is reflected in the person of Death (Θάνατος) and the part which he plays in the *Alcestis*. First, in the altercation between Apollo and Death over the fate of Alcestis, there occur the words, 'Take her and go thy way; for I know not whether I should persuade thee'; to which Death answers, 'Persuade me to slay those whom I must? nay, 'tis with this that I am charged' (τοῦτο γὰρ τετάγμεθα[1]). Can it be a mere coincidence that, in modern folk-song, when some doomed man seeks to persuade Charos to grant a respite, he answers, 'Nay, brave sir, I cannot; for I am straitly charged'? The very word 'charged,' προσταμμένος, the modern form of προστεταγμένος, repeats the word placed by Euripides in the mouth of Death. Secondly, Death appears in warrior-guise, just as does Charos most commonly in modern folk-songs; he is girt with a sword[2], and it is by wrestling[3] that Heracles vanquishes him and makes him yield up his prey. Is this again a mere coincidence? Or was Euripides, in his personification of Death, utilising the character popularly assigned to Charon? It looks indeed in one line as if the poet had almost forgotten that he was not using the popular name also; otherwise there is no excuse for the inelegance of making Death inflict death[4]. It is hardly surprising that the copyist of one[5] of the extant manuscripts of the *Alcestis* was so impressed with the likeness of Death to Charon as he knew him, that he altered the name of the *dramatis persona* accordingly.

In the Anthology again Charon appears several times[6] acting in a more extended capacity than that of ferryman; as in modern folk-songs, he actually seizes men and carries them off to the nether world. One epigram is particularly noticeable as seeming to have been suggested by a passage of the *Alcestis*. 'Is there then any way whereby Alcestis might come unto old age?' asks Apollo; and Death answers, 'There is none; I too must have the pleasure of my dues.' 'Yet,' says Apollo, 'thou wilt not get more than the one soul,'—be it now or later. And similarly the epigram from the Anthology, save that Death is frankly named Charon.

[1] Eur. *Alc.* 48, 49. [2] *Ibid.* 74—6. [3] *Ibid.* 1141—2. [4] *Ibid.* 50.
[5] Codex Vaticanus, no. 909. Cf. Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 223, whence the majority of these references are borrowed.
[6] VII. 603 and 671; XI. 133. Cf. Schmidt, *l.c.*

'Charon ever insatiable, why hast thou snatched away Attalus needlessly in his youth? Was he not thine, an he had died old?'

Clearly, it would seem, Euripides knew a popular conception of Charon other than that which literary and artistic tradition had crystallised as the orthodox presentation, but rather than break through the conventions by bringing Charon on the stage otherwise than as ferryman, he had recourse to a purely artificial personification of death.

But the conception of Charon as lord of death can be traced yet further back than the time of Euripides. Hesychius states that the title Ἀκμονίδης[1] was shared by two gods, Charon and Uranus. Charon therefore, as son of Acmon and brother of Uranus, is earlier by two long generations of gods than Zeus himself, and belongs to the old Pelasgian order of deities. Was Charon then the god of death among the old Pelasgian population of Greece, before ever the name of Hades or Pluto had been invented or imported? Yes, if the corroboration from another Pelasgian source, the Etruscans, is to count for anything. On an Etruscan monument figures the god of death with the inscription 'Charun'[2]; and the same person is frequently depicted on urns, sarcophagi, and vases[3]. Usually the door of the nether world is to be seen behind him; either he is issuing forth to seek his prey, or he is about to enter there with a victim who stands close beside him, his hand clasped in that of wife or friend to whom he bids farewell[4]. In appearance he is most often an old bearded man (though a more youthful type is also known) bearing an axe or mallet, and more rarely a sword as well, wherewith he pursues men and slays them[5]. In effect the Etruscan Charun closely corresponds with the modern Greek Charos in functions as well as in name. The coincidence allows of one explanation only. The Greeks of the present day must have inherited their idea of Charos from ancestors who were closely connected with the Etruscans and to whom Charon was the god of death who came to seize men's souls and carry them off to his realm in the nether world. These ancestors can only have been the original Pelasgian population of Greece. In classical times the

[1] s.v.
[2] Gerhard, *die Gottheiten der Etrusker*, p. 56; Müller, *die Etrusker*, II. 102.
[3] Ambrosch, *de Charonte Etrusco*, pp. 2, 3.
[4] *Ibid.* p. 8.
[5] *Ibid.* pp. 4—7; and Maury in *Revue Archéologique*, I. 665, and IV. 791.

primitive conception of Charon was in abeyance. Hades had assumed the reins of government in the nether world; and a literary legend, which confined Charon to the work of ferryman, had gained vogue and supplanted or rather temporarily suppressed the older conception. But this version, it appears, never gained complete mastery of the popular imagination, and to the common-folk of Greece from the Pelasgian era down to this day Charon has ever been more warrior than ferryman, and his equipment an axe or sword or bow rather than a pair of sculls. More is to be learnt of the real Charon of antiquity from modern folk-lore than from all the allusions of classical literature.

## § 7. Aphrodite and Eros.

In the story of S. Demetra communicated to Lenormant at Eleusis and narrated above, we have already had one instance of the preservation of Aphrodite's name. 'Since the lady Aphrodite (ἡ κυρὰ 'φροδίτη) none had been seen so lovely' as S. Demetra's daughter. Another story related to Perrot[1] by an Attic peasant in the year 1858 contains both the name of the goddess and some reminiscences of her worship. The gist of it is as follows. There once was a very beautiful queen, by name Aphrodite, who had a castle at Daphni (just half-way on the road from Athens to Eleusis) and also owned the heights of Acro-Corinth; these two places she had caused to be connected by a subterranean way which passed under the sea. Now there were two kings both of whom were smitten with her beauty and sought her hand in marriage. She herself favoured one of them and hated the other; but not wishing to declare her preference and so arouse the anger of the rejected suitor, she announced that she was about to build a palace on the height of Acro-Corinth, and would set her suitors each a task to perform; one should build the fortifications round the summit, the other should sink a well to provide the castle with water[2]; and she promised her hand to the suitor who should first

[1] *Annuaire de l'Association pour l'encouragement des études grecques en France*, no. VIII. (1874), p. 392 ff.

[2] Both fortifications and well are actual features of Acro-Corinth up to the present day.

complete his task. Now she supposed the sinking of the well to be the lighter task and therefore assigned it to the suitor whom she favoured; but he met with unforeseen difficulties, and his rival meanwhile made steady progress with the walls. At last they were wellnigh built, and it remained only to put in place the keystone over the main gate. Then Aphrodite, marking the danger, went with winning words and smiles and bade the builder lay aside his tools, for the prize was now safely in his grasp, and led him away to a grassy spot where she beguiled him so long with tender words and caresses, that the other suitor meanwhile redoubling his efforts pierced the rock and found water in plenty.

In this story the character, as well as the name, of the queen is that of the ancient goddess; but there are other points too deserving of notice. Perrot points out that in the neighbourhood of the modern monastery at Daphni there stood in antiquity a temple of Aphrodite[1]; and to this fact Schmidt[2], in commenting on the story, adds that on the summit of Acro-Corinth also there was a sanctuary of the goddess[3], while he accounts for the mention of that place in an Attic story by the fact that Corinth was specially famous for the worship of Aphrodite.

No other vestiges of the actual name, so far as I know, are to be found, save that among certain Maniote settlers in Corsica the corrupt derivative, Ἀφροδήτησσα[4] (which would perhaps be better spelt Ἀφροδίτισσα) was until recent times at any rate applied to an equally corrupt class of women, votaries of Ἀφροδίτη Πάνδημος. In a few stories however from Zacynthos[5] the same goddess is prettily described as ἡ μάνα τοῦ Ἔρωτα[6], 'the Mother of Love,' a title competent in itself to establish her identity.

The first of these stories tells how a poor maiden fell in love with a youth of high degree, and went to the Mother of Love to ask her help. The latter promised to ask the assistance of her son Eros (Ἔρωτας) when he came home. Next morning went Eros with bow and arrows and sat at the maiden's door till the swain passed by. Then suddenly he shot his arrow at him, and the young man loved the maiden and took her to wife.

[1] Pausan. I. 37, *ad fin.*; Perrot, *l.c.* Cf. Frazer, *Pausanias*, II. 497.
[2] *Märchen* etc. *Introduction*, p. 35.
[3] Cf. Bursian, *Geographie von Griechenland*, II. p. 17.
[4] Vréto, *Mélange Néo-hellenique*.
[5] Schmidt, *Märchen* etc. nos. 16—18.
[6] *Ibid.* p. 113 (note 2).

Another yet more remarkable story introduces us to the garden of Eros, whither a prince once went to fetch water to cure the blindness of the king, his father. 'There at the entrance he beheld a woman that was the fairest upon earth; she sat at the gate and played with a boy who had wings and in his hand held a bow and many arrows. The garden was full of roses, and over them hovered many little winged boys like butterflies. In the midst of this garden was a spring, whence the healing water flowed. As the king's son drew near to this spring, he espied therein a woman white as snow and shining as the moon; and it was in very truth the moon that bathed there. Beside the spring sat a second woman of exceeding beauty who was the Mother of Eros (*ἡ μάνα τοῦ Ἔρωτα*).' She gave him the water and her blessing, and his father was healed.

The distinct reminiscence of Artemis in this story will be noticed later[1]; here we need only notice a few points in the story relating to Eros and his mother. The description of the 'boy who had wings and in his hand held a bow and many arrows' is simply and purely classical, according exactly with the Orphic address to him as *τοξάλκη, πτερόεντα*[2]. The 'woman at the gate who was the fairest upon earth' is in all probability the same as 'the Mother of Eros' beside the spring, the single personality, by some vagary in the transmission of the story, having become duplicated. The roses, of which the garden was full, are the flower always sacred to Aphrodite, the sweetest emblem of love; and over these it is fitting that the 'little winged boys' should hover, brothers as it were of Eros, ever-fresh embodiments of love, to all of whom, in antiquity, Aphrodite was mother[3].

These folk-tales present sufficient evidence that the memory of the name and attributes of Aphrodite survived locally until recent times to warrant the conclusion that her worship, like that of other pagan deities, possessed vitality enough to compete for a long while with Christianity for the favour of the common-folk; but as a personality she is no longer present, I think, to their consciousness; she is at most only a character in a few

[1] See below, p. 165.

[2] *Orph. Hymns*, 57 (58), 2.

[3] *Orph. Hymns*, 55, 8. *μήτερ ἐρώτων*. For representations in ancient art of many *ἔρωτες*, cf. Philostr. *Eikones*, p. 383 (770).

folk-stories—if indeed the present generation has not forgotten even these. For my part, I never heard mention of her in story or otherwise, although her son, the winged Eros, is often named in the love-songs which form a large part of the popular poetry.

Vows and offerings which would in former days have been made to Aphrodite are now made either to suitable saints who have taken her place, such as S. Catharine[1], or to the Fates (Μοίραις), who were from of old associated with her. According to a fragment of Epimenides[2], 'golden Aphrodite and the deathless Fates' were daughters of Cronos and Euonyme. Their sisterly relation was recognised also in cult. Near the Ilissus once stood a temple containing an old wooden statue (ξόανον) of Heavenly Aphrodite with an inscription naming her 'eldest of the Fates' (πρεσβυτέρα τῶν Μοιρῶν)[3]. So venerable a shrine must in old time have witnessed many a petition for success in love; and when we bear in mind the ancient inscription of the statue, it is interesting to find that among the girls of Athens until recent times the custom prevailed of visiting the so-called 'hollow hill[4]' (τρύπιο βουνό) in the immediate neighbourhood to offer to the Fates cakes with honey and salt and to consult them as to their destined husbands[5].

Sacred also to Aphrodite in old days was a cave in the neighbourhood of Naupactus, frequented particularly by widows anxious to be remarried[6]. At the present day a cave at the foot of Mt Rigani, which may probably be identified as the old sanctuary, is the spot to which girls repair in order to consult the Fates on the all-absorbing question[7].

Thus it seems that 'golden Aphrodite' has disappeared from the old sisterly group of deities, and that 'the deathless Fates' alone remain to receive prayers and to grant boons which once fell within the province rather of Aphrodite. To the Fates we must now turn.

[1] See above, p. 57.
[2] Tzetzes, *Schol. on Lycophron*, 406.
[3] Pausan. I. 19. 2. Cf. *C. I. G.* no. 1444, and *Orph. Hymn*, 55 (54), 4.
[4] Apparently the old subterranean passage by which competitors entered the stadium.
[5] Mentioned by Pouqueville, *Voyage en Grèce*, v. p. 67, and confirmed by many other writers.
[6] Pausan. x. 38. 6.
[7] Pouqueville, *op. cit.* IV. p. 46.

## § 8. The Fates.

The custom of taking or sending offerings to a cave haunted by the Fates, of which we have just seen two examples, is widely extended among the women of Greece. In Athens, besides the 'hollow hill,' two or three of the old rock-dwellings round about the Hill of the Muses were formerly a common resort for the same purpose, and the practice though rarer now is not yet extinct[1]. Among the best-known of these resorts is the so-called Prison of Socrates. Dodwell, in his account of his travels in Greece at the beginning of last century, states that he found there 'in the inner chamber, a small feast consisting of a cup of honey and white almonds, a cake on a little napkin, and a vase of aromatic herbs burning and exhaling an agreeable perfume[2]'; and the observance of the custom is known to have continued in that place down to recent years[3]. The same practice, I was informed at Sparta, is known at the present day to the peasant-women of the surrounding plain, who will undertake even a long and wearisome journey to lay a honey-cake in a certain cave on one of the eastern spurs of Taÿgetus. Other places in which to my own knowledge the custom still continues are Agrinion in Aetolia and neighbouring districts, the villages of Mt Pelion in Thessaly, and the island of Scyros; and from the testimony of many other observers I conclude that it is, or was till recently, universal in Greek lands.

Nor does there seem to be much variety in the subjects on which the peasant-women consult the Fates: with the girls matrimony, with the married women maternity, is the perpetually recurring theme. Everywhere also honey in some form is an essential part of the offering by which the Fates' favour is to be won. The acceptance of this offering, and therefore also the success of the prayers which accompany it, are occasionally, as in the cave near Sparta which I have mentioned, inferred from omens provided by the dripping of water from the roof of the

[1] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, I. p. 222, III. p. 156. Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. p. 227.
[2] Dodwell, *Tour through Greece*, I. 397.
[3] Πολίτης, *l.c.*

cave; but more usually the realisation of the conjugal aspirations is not assured, unless a second visit to the sanctuary, three days or a month later, proves that the sweetmeats have been accepted by the Fates and are gone. This, I am told, occurs with some frequency. Dodwell mentions that his donkey ate some[1]; and considering the character of the offerings—cakes and honey for the most part, for only in the 'hollow hill' at Athens was salt added thereto—it is not surprising if the Fates find many willing proxies, human and canine as well as asinine.

At the moment when these delicacies are proffered, an invocation is recited. This may take the form of a metrical line,

Μοίραις μου, μοιράνετέ με, καὶ καλὸ φαγὶ σας φέρνω,

'Kind Fates, ordain my fate, for I bring you good fare,'

or may be a simple prose formulary,

Μοίραις τῶν Μοιρῶν καὶ τῆς τάδε ἡ Μοῖρα, κοπιάστε νὰ φᾶτε καὶ νὰ ξαναμοιράνετε τὴν τάδε νἄχῃ καλὴ μοῖρα[2],

'Fates above all Fates, and Fate of N., come ye, I pray, and eat, and ordain anew the fate of N., that she may have a good fate.'

Various other versions are also on record, one of which will be considered later; but these two examples illustrate sufficiently for the present the simple Homeric tenour of such prayers.

The words which I have quoted, it must be admitted, give clear expression to the hope that the Fates may revise the decrees which they have already pronounced on the fortunes of the suppliant. Nevertheless that such a hope should be fulfilled is contrary to the general beliefs of the people. The Fates, they know, are inexorable so far as concerns the changing of any of their purposes once set; for, as their proverb runs, *ὅτι γράφουν ἡ Μοίραις, δὲν ξεγράφουν*, 'what the Fates write, that they make not unwritten[3].' They are not, it would appear, subordinate, as Charon is sometimes deemed to be, even to the supreme God; I can find no song or story that would so present them. They are absolute and irresponsible in the fashioning of human destiny. But the Greek peasants are not the first who have at the same time believed both in predestination and in the efficacy of prayer.

[1] *l.c.*

[2] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. I. p. 222.

[3] Cf. *ἦτον γραφτό μου*, 'It was my written lot,' i.e. destiny, and other similar phrases cited by Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 212, and Πολίτης, Μελέτη, pp. 218, 219.

Perhaps all unconsciously they reconcile the ideas as did Aeschylus of old:

τὸ μόρσιμον μένει πάλαι,
εὐχομένοις δ' ἂν ἔλθοι[1],

'Destiny hath long been abiding its time, but in answer to prayer may come.'

But even without any intuition of so hard a doctrine the peasant-women may justify their prayers and offerings by the hope that, though the Fates will detract nothing from the fulfilment of whatsoever they have spoken or written, they may be willing to add thereto such supplement as shall modify in large measure the issue. For the Fates are as Greek in character as their worshippers, and stories are not wanting to illustrate the shifts to which they have stooped in order practically to invalidate without formally cancelling their whilom purpose.

'Once upon a time a poor woman gave birth to a daughter, and on the third night after the birth the Fates came to ordain the child's lot. As they entered the cottage they saw prepared for them a table with a clean cloth and all manner of sweetmeats thereon. So when they had partaken thereof and were content, they were kindly disposed toward the child. And the first Fate gave to her long life, and the second beauty, and the third chastity. But as they went forth from the cottage, the first of them tripped against the threshold, and turning in wrath towards the infant pronounced that she should be always an idler.

Now when she was grown up, she was so beautiful that the king's son would have her to wife. As the wedding-day drew near, her mother and her friends chided her because she delayed to make her wedding dress; but she was idle and heeded not. Soon came the eve of the wedding, and she wept because the prince would learn of her idleness and refuse to take her to wife. Now the Fates loved her, and saw her tears and pitied her. Therefore they came suddenly before her, and asked why she wept; and she told them all. Then sat they down there and spun and weaved and embroidered all that night, and in the morning they arrayed her in a bridal dress decked with gold and pearls such as had never been seen.

[1] *Choeph.* 464—5, which the Scholiast annotates thus, πέπηγε μὲν καὶ ὥρισται ὑπὸ Μοιρῶν τὸ τὴν Κλυταιμνήστραν ἀνδροκτονήσασαν ἀναιρεθῆναι κ.τ.λ.

Presently came the prince, and there was much feasting and dancing, and she was far the most beautiful of all the company. And because he saw her lovely dress and knew how much toil it must have cost her to array herself thus for him, he granted her the favour of doing no more work all her days[1].'

This story, besides illustrating well the finality of every word pronounced by the Fates and the means which they may employ to mitigate their own severity, is typical too of the ideas generally accepted concerning the Fates. Their number is three[2], and they are seen in the shape of old women, one of whom at least is always engaged in spinning. Of the remaining two, one is sometimes seen bearing a book wherein to record in writing the decrees which the three jointly utter, while the other carries a pair of scissors wherewith to cut the thread of life at the appointed time; or again sometimes these two also are spinning, one of them carrying a basket of wool or a distaff and the other fashioning the thread. This association of the Fates with spinning operations is commemorated in certain popular phrases by the comparison of man's life to a thread. 'His thread is cut' or 'is finished' (*κόπηκε* or *σώθηκε ἡ κλωστή του*) is a familiar euphemism for 'he is dead': and again, with the same ultimate meaning but a somewhat different metaphor, the people of Arachova use the phrase *μαζώθηκε τὸ κουβάρ' του*[3], 'his spindle is wound full,'—an expression which seems to imply the idea that the Fates apportion to each man at birth a mass of rough wool from which they go on spinning day by day till the thread of life is completed.

According to Fauriel[4], a reminiscence of the Fates is also to be found in a personification of the plague (*ἡ πανοῦκλα*), which in the tradition of some districts is not represented as a single demon but has been multiplied into a trio of terrible women who pass through the towns and devastate them, one of them carrying a roll on which to write the names of the victims, another a pair of scissors wherewith to cut them off from the living, and the third a broom with which to sweep them away. He assigns however no

[1] I regret to say that I cannot trace the source of this story. I incline to think that I took it from some publication, but it is possible that it was narrated to me personally.

[2] Except in Zacynthos, according to Schmidt (*Volksleben*, p. 211), where they number twelve.

[3] Schmidt, *Volksleben*, p. 220.

[4] *Chants populaires de la Grèce moderne*, *Discours préliminaire*, p. 83.

reason for identifying the deadly trio with the Fates, and it is more natural, if any link with antiquity here exists, to connect them with the Erinyes[1] or other similar deities. In fact their resemblance to the Fates, save for some superficial details, is small. The Fates, though inexorable when once their decree is pronounced, are never wantonly cruel. Their displeasure may indeed be aroused by neglect, as we shall shortly see, to such an extent that they will visit the sins of the fathers upon the children. But, when men treat them with the consideration and the reverence due to deities, they are unfailingly kindly, and deserve the title by which they are sometimes known, ἡ καλοκυράδες, 'the good ladies.' For this name is not an euphemism concealing dread and hatred, but an expression of genuine reverence; such at any rate is my judgement, based on many conversations with the common-folk in all parts of Greece—for on this topic for some reason there is far less reticence than on many others. And indeed if the character of the Fates were believed to be cruel, their aspect also would be represented as grim and menacing; whereas they are actually pourtrayed as deserving almost of pity rather than awe by reason of their age and their infirmity.

The occasion on which the Fates have most often been seen by human eyes and on which, even though invisible, they never fail to be present, is the third night (or as some say the fifth night[2]) after the birth of a child. Provision for their arrival is then scrupulously made. The dog is chained up. Any obstacles over which the visitors might trip in the darkness are removed. The house-door is left open or at any rate unlatched. Inside a light is kept burning, and in the middle of the room is set a low table with three cushions or low stools placed round it—religious conservatism apparently forbidding the use of so modern an invention as chairs, for at the lying-in-state before a funeral also cushions or low stools are provided for the mourners. On the table are set out such dainties as the Fates love, including always honey; in Athens formerly the essentials were a dish of honey, three white almonds, a loaf of bread, and a glass of water[3];

[1] According to Bent (*Cyclades*, pp. 292 and 437), the name Erinyes is still applied by the people of Andros and of Kythnos to the evil spirits who cause consumption.

[2] So Pouqueville, *Voyage de la Grèce*, VI. p. 160.

[3] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην., III. pp. 67, 68.

and ready to hand, as presents from which the goddesses may choose what they will, may be laid all the most costly treasures of the family, such as jewellery and even money, in token that nothing has been spared to give them welcome. These preparations made, their visit is awaited in solemn silence; for none must speak when the Fates draw near. Most often they are neither seen nor heard; but sometimes, it is said, a wakeful mother has seen their forms as they bent over her child and wrote their decrees on its brow—for which reason moles and other marks on the forehead or the nose are in some places called γραψίματα τῶν Μοιρῶν[1], 'writings of the Fates'; sometimes she has heard the low sound of their voices as they consulted together over the future of the child; nay more, she has even caught and understood their speech; yet even so her foreknowledge of the infant's fate is unavailing; she may be aware of the dangers which await its ripening years, but though forewarned she is powerless to forearm; against destiny once pronounced all weapons, all wiles, are futile.

Neglect of any of the due preparations for the visit of the Fates may excite their wrath and cause them to decree an evil lot for the child. This idea is the *motif* of many fables current in Greece. A typical example is furnished by the following extract from a popular poem in which a man whose life has brought him nothing but misery sees in a vision one of the Fates and appeals to her thus:

'I beg and pray of thee, O Fate, to tell me now, my lady,
Then when my mother brought me forth, what passèd at my bearing?'

And she makes answer:

'Then when thy mother brought thee forth, 'twas deep and bitter winter,
Eleven days o' the year had run when anguish came upon her.
Thereon[2] I robed me and did on this raiment that thou seëst,
And had it in my heart to cry "Long life to thee and riches."
Ah, but the night was deep and dark, yea wrappèd thick in darkness,
And hail and snow were driving hard, and angry rain was lashing;
From mire to mud, from mud to mire, so lay my road before me,
And as I went,—a murrain on't,—against your well I stumbled;
Nay, sirrah, an thou believest not, scan well the scars I carry.
Two cursèd hounds ye had withal, hounds from the Lombard country,
And fierce upon me sprang the twain, and fierce as wolves their baying.
Then cursed I thee full bitterly, a curse of very venom,
That no bright day should ever cheer thy miserable body,

[1] Cf. Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. p. 218.

[2] The visit of the Fate on the day of birth instead of the third day after is unusual.

That thou shouldst burn, that thou shouldst burn, and have no hope of riddance,
That joy should ever 'scape thy clasp, and sorrow dog thy goings,
That thine own kin should slander thee and thy friends rail upon thee,
Nor strangers nor thy countrymen know aught of love toward thee.
Yet, hapless man, not thine the sin; thy parents' was the sinning,
That chainèd not those hounds right fast to a corner of their dwelling;
Well is it said by men of old, well bruit they loud the saying,
"The fathers eat of acid things, and the bairns' teeth fall aching."
Have patience then, O hapless man; a year or twain of patience,
And there shall come a happy day when all thy woes shall vanish;
For all thy bitterness of soul thou shalt find consolation,
Thy dreams of beauty and of wealth thou shalt at last encompass[1].'

The Fates, it has been already said, are three in number; why so, it seems impossible to determine. It may be that the functions discharged by them fell readily into a three-fold division; thus in the district of Zagorion in Epirus, one Fate 'spins the thread' (*κλώθει τὸ γνέμα*) which determines the length of life, the second apportions good fortune, and the third bad[2]. Or again, the division may have been made in such a way that one Fate should preside over each of the three great events of human experience, birth, marriage, and death. The term 'fate' (*μοῖρα*)[3] is often used by women as a synonym for marriage (*γάμος*)—in curious contrast with the man's more optimistic description of his wedding as *χαρά*, 'joy'; and a Greek proverb, used of a very ignorant man, *δὲν ξέρει τὰ τρία κακὰ τῆς Μοίρας του*, 'he does not know the three evils of his Fate,' to wit birth, marriage, and death, carries the connexion of fate with these three events a little further. But such distributions of functions are probably posterior to the choice of the number. Three was always a sacred number, and the ancients delighted in trinities of goddesses[4].

But besides the three great Fates we must recognise also in modern Greece the existence of lesser Fates, attached each to a single human life. This is a slight extension of the main belief, and consists really in the personification of the objective fate which the three great Fates decree. Just as each man is believed to have his good guardian-angel and, by antithesis but with less biblical warranty, his bad angel, so too he is accompanied by his own personal Fate. But these lesser Fates

[1] From Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην.* I. pp. 310, 311.
[2] Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 212.
[3] Cf. *μόρσιμος* of the 'destined' bridegroom, in Hom. *Od.* XVI. 392.
[4] Cf. Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 286 ff.

are only faint replicas of the great trinity, and I doubt whether they are believed to have any independent power of their own; they would seem to be mere ministers who carry out the original decrees of the three supreme Fates.

Often in the popular songs it is impossible to tell whether it is the lesser personal Fate or one of the great trio who is addressed. For in such lines as,

Παρακαλῶ σε, Μοῖρα μου, νὰ μή με ξενιτέψῃς,
Κι' ἂν λάχῃ καὶ ξενιτευτῶ, θάνατο μή μου δώσῃς[1],

'I pray thee, good Fate, send me not to a strange land, but if it be my lot to be sent, let me not die there,'

the form of address Μοῖρα μου (literally 'my Fate') implies no personal possession, but is the same as that employed in praying to God or the Virgin, Θεέ μου, Παναγία μου. But in definite forms of incantation, composed for recitation along with propitiatory offerings, the great Fates and the lesser Fate of the individual suppliant are coupled in a way which shows the difference in importance between them. The former are called 'the Fates over all Fates' (ἡ Μοίραις τῶν Μοιρῶν), as in the plain prose formulary quoted above; the latter is merely the Fate of this or that person.

Whether these inferior Fates were known also in the classical period is a question which I am unable to answer; but that the belief in them is certainly of no recent growth is proved by an incantation more elaborate than those given above and on internal evidence very old:—

'π' τὸν Ὄλυμπον, τὸν κόλυμβον,
τὰ τρία ἄκρα τοὐρανοῦ,
ὁποῦ ἦ Μοίραις τῶν Μοιρῶν
καὶ ἡ 'δική μου Μοῖρα,
ἂς ἀκούσῃ καὶ ἂς ἔλθῃ[2].

'From Olympus, even from the summit, from the three heights of heaven, where dwell the Fates of all Fates and my own Fate, may she hearken and come.'

The version of the formula which I have given is only one out of several which have been recorded from various parts of Greece[3],

[1] Passow, no. 385.

[2] Heuzey, *Le mont Olympe*, p. 139. I have introduced a few alterations of spelling, mostly suggested by Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 229 (note), *e.g.* τοὐρανοῦ for τοῦ οὐρανοῦ, in order to restore the rather rough metre.

[3] Πολίτης (Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. p. 228, note 1) gives the following references: Wordsworth, *Athens and Attica*, p. 228; Ἐφημ. Φιλομαθῶν, 1868, p. 1479; Passow, *Popul. Carm.* p. 431, besides those to which I have referred in other notes.

and there can be no doubt that the original was a widely-esteemed incantation. I have given the most intelligible; but the mere fact that some of the others, through verbal corruption in the course of tradition, have become almost meaningless, is strong proof of the antiquity of the original. There are however two clear marks of antiquity in the version before us. The mention of Olympus as the abode of deities carries us back at once to the classical age; and the word κόλυμβος in the sense of 'summit' is no less suggestive of a very early date. The ancient word κόρυμβος, used in this sense by Aeschylus[1] and by Herodotus[2], is obsolete now in the spoken language. But κόλυμβος is evidently either a dialectic form of it (with the common interchange of λ and ρ) or else a corrupt form, not understood by those who continued to use it in this incantation, and assimilated, by way of assonance, to Ὄλυμπος. Further one of the other versions gives the word as κόρυβο[3], where the original ρ is retained but the μ lost before β, which now universally has the sound of the English *v*. A comparison of the two forms therefore establishes beyond question the fact that the somewhat rare classical word κόρυμβος, in its known meaning of 'summit,' was the original form. Hence the incantation, containing both a mention of Olympus as the seat of deities and an old classical word long since disused, cannot but date from very early times. Possibly therefore the belief in subordinate Fates, attached each to one human being, was known to the common-folk of the classical age.

But, be this as it may, the popular conception of the great Trinity of Fates has persisted unchanged for more than a score of centuries—and who shall say for how many more? Here the literary tradition of classical times was evidently faithful to popular traditions. The number of the Fates is still the same as in Hesiod's day[4]; they are still depicted as old and infirm women, as they were by the poets at any rate in antiquity, though in ancient art, for beauty's sake, they are apt to be figured as more youthful; it is still their task 'to assign to mortal men at their

[1] *Persae*, 659. [2] VII. 218.

[3] Πιττάκης, who recorded this version in Ἐφημ. Ἀρχαιολογική, no. 30 (1852), p. 653, spelt the word erroneously κόροιβο; the sound of οι and υ being identical in modern Greek, I have substituted the latter.

[4] *Theog.* 217 and 904.

birth,' as Hesiod knew, 'both good and ill[1]'; the functions of Clotho who spun the thread of life, of Lachesis who apportioned destiny, and of Atropos whom none might turn from her purpose, are still the joint functions of the great Three; the book, the spindle, and an instrument for cutting the thread of life are still their attributes.

There is little new therefore to be learnt from the study of the Fates in modern folk-lore. The lesson which it teaches rather is the continuity of the present with the past. But there is one point to which special attention may perhaps be directed—the belief that the Fates invariably visit each child that is born in order to decree its lot. I do not wish to engage in the controversy which has raged round the identification of the figures in the east pediment of the Parthenon; but those who would recognise among them the three Fates may fairly draw a fresh argument from the strength of this popular belief. It is only fitting that at the birth of Athena from the head of Zeus the Fates should be present; for even Zeus himself, said Aeschylus[2], might not escape their decree.

## § 9. The Nymphs.

Of all the supernatural beings who haunt the path and the imagination of the modern Greek peasant by far the most common are the Nymphs or 'Nereids' (Νεράϊδες). The name itself occurs in a multitude of dialectic varieties[3], but its meaning is everywhere uniform, and more comprehensive than that of the ancient word. It is no longer confined to nymphs of the sea, but embraces also their kindred of mountain, river, and woodland. There is no

[1] *Theog.* 217. [2] *Prom. Vinct.* 516 ff.

[3] Leo Allatius (*de quorumdam Graec. opinationibus*, cap. xx.) quotes from Mich. Psellus (11th century) the ancient form Νηρηΐδες as then in use. He himself (*ibid.* cap. xix.) employs the form Ναραγίδες which was probably the dialectic form of his native Chios. Bern. Schmidt (*Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, pp. 98–9) has brought together a large number of variants now in use, in which the accent fluctuates between the α and the ι, the first vowel is indifferently α, ε, or η, the two consecutive vowels (αϊ) are sometimes contracted to ᾳ, sometimes more distinctly separated by the faintly pronounced letter γ, and lastly an euphonetic α is occasionally prefixed to the word. Hence forms as widely distinct as ἀνερᾶδες and ναραγίδες often occur. Du Cange, it may be added, gives the form Ναγαρίδες (with interchange of the ρ and the inserted γ); but since his information is seemingly drawn entirely from Leo Allatius, there is reason to regard it as merely his own error in transcribing Ναραγίδες.

longer a Nereus, god of the sea, to claim the Nereids as his daughters, denizens like himself of the deep; and the connexion of their name with the modern word for 'water' (*νερό*) is not understanded of the common-folk. Hence there has been nothing to restrain the extension of the term *Νεράϊδα*, and it has entirely superseded, in this sense, the ancient *νύμφη*, which in modern speech can only mean 'a bride.'

The familiarity of the peasants with the Nereids is more intimate than can be easily imagined by those who have merely travelled, it may be, through the country but have no knowledge of the people in their homes. The educated classes of course, and with them some of the less communicative of the peasants, will deny all belief in such beings and affect to deride as old wives' fables the many stories concerning them. But in truth the belief is one which even men of considerable culture fail sometimes to eradicate from their own breasts. A paper on the Nereids (the nucleus of the present chapter) was read by me in Athens at an open meeting of the British School; and no sooner was it ended than an Athenian gentleman whose name is well known in certain learned circles throughout Europe rose hurriedly crossing himself and disappeared without a word of leave-taking. As for the peasants, let them deny or avow their belief, there is probably no nook or hamlet in all Greece where the womenfolk at least do not scrupulously take precautions against the thefts and the malice of the Nereids, while many a man may still be found ready to recount in all good faith stories of their beauty and passion and caprice. Nor is it a matter of faith only; more than once I have been in villages where certain Nereids were known by sight to several persons (so at least they averred); and there was a wonderful agreement among the witnesses in the description of their appearance and dress. I myself once had a Nereid pointed out to me by my guide, and there certainly was the semblance of a female figure draped in white and tall beyond human stature flitting in the dusk between the gnarled and twisted boles of an old olive-yard. What the apparition was, I had no leisure to investigate; for my guide with many signs of the cross and muttered invocations of the Virgin urged my mule to perilous haste along the rough mountain-path. But had I inherited, as he, a belief in Nereids together with a fertile gift of mendacity, I should

doubtless have corroborated the highly-coloured story which he told when we reached the light and safety of the next village; and the ready acceptance of the story by those who heard it proved to me that a personal encounter with Nereids was really reckoned among the possible incidents of every-day life.

The awe in which the Nereids are held is partially responsible, without doubt, for the many adulatory by-names by which they are known. Now and again indeed a peasant, when he is suffering from some imagined injury at their hands, may so far speak his mind concerning them as to call them 'evil women' (*κακαὶς* or *ἄσχημαις γυναῖκες*): but in general his references are more diplomatic and conciliatory in tone. He adopts the same attitude towards them as did his forefathers towards the Furies; and, though the actual word 'Eumenides' is lost to his vocabulary, the spirit of his address is unchanged. 'The Ladies' (*ἡ κυρᾶδες*), 'Our Maidens' (*τὰ κουρίτσια μας*), 'Our good Queens' (*ἡ καλαὶς ἀρχόντισσαις*), 'The kind-hearted ones' (*ἡ καλόκαρδαις*), 'The ladies to whom we wish joy' (*ἡ χαιράμεναις*), or most commonly of all 'Our good Ladies' (*ἡ καλοκυρᾶδες* or *καλλικυρᾶδες*)[1],—such is the wonted style of his adulation, in which the frequent use of the word *κυρᾶδες* (the plural of *κυρά*, i.e. *κυρία*) is a heritage from his ancestors who made dedications 'to the lady nymphs' (*κυρίαις νύμφαις*). Yet it may be questioned whether these by-names are wholly euphemistic; for mingled with the awe which the Nereids inspire there is certainly an element of admiration and, I had almost said, of affection in the feelings of the common-folk toward them.

The Nereids are conceived as women half-divine yet not immortal, always young, always beautiful, capricious at best, and at

[1] An attempt has been made by one authority on the folk-lore of Athens (Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων, I. pp. 218 and 222), to distinguish *καλοκυρᾶδες* from *νεράϊδες*. He maintains that in Athens the latter were never regarded as maleficent beings, and must therefore be distinguished from the dread *καλοκυρᾶδες*, whom he seeks to identify, on no better ground than the euphemistic name, with the Eumenides. A folk-story, however, which he himself records (*ibid.* p. 319), how a *καλοκυρά* was married to a prince, whose eyes she had blinded to all other women, and how after living with him for a while she disappeared finally in a whirlwind, reveals in her all the usual traits of a Nereid, and thus defeats the writer's previous contention. But apart from this a little enquiry on the subject outside the limits of Athens would have set at rest his doubts as to the identity of the two. It is quite possible that formerly in Athens, as now elsewhere, it was usual to employ the euphemism *καλοκυρᾶδες* in referring to the Nereids in their more mischievous moods; only in that way can I explain his idea that the Nereids were never maleficent.

their worst cruel. Their presence is suspected everywhere; grim forest-depth and laughing valley, babbling stream and wind-swept ridge, tree and cave and pool, each may be their chosen haunt, the charmed scene of their dance and song and godlike revelry. The old distinctions between the nymphs according to their habitations still to some extent hold good; there are nymphs of the sea and nymphs of the streams, tree-nymphs and mountain-nymphs; but in characteristics these several classes are alike, in grace, in frolic, in wantonness. Of all that is light and mirthful they are the ideal; of all that is lovely the exquisite embodiment; and their hearts beneath are ever swayed by fierce gusts of love and of hate.

The beauty of the Nereids, the sweetness of their voices, and the grace and litheness of their movements have given rise to many familiar phrases which are eloquent of feelings other than awe in the people's minds. 'She is fair as a Nereid' (*εἶνε ὥμορφη σὰ νεράϊδα*), 'she has the eyes, the arms, the bosom of a Nereid' (*ἔχει μάτια, χέρια, βυζιὰ νεράϊδας*), 'she sings, she dances, like a Nereid' (*τραγουδάει, χορεύει, σὰ νεράϊδα*),—such are the compliments time and again passed upon a bride, whose white dress and ornaments of gold seem to complete the resemblance. Possibly the twofold usage in antiquity of the word *νύμφη* is responsible for a still surviving association of bridal dress with the Nereids; it is at any rate to the peasants' mind an incontestable fact that white and gold are the colours chiefly affected by Nereids in their dress[1].

Only in one particular is the beauty of the Nereids ever thought to be marred; in some localities they are said to have the feet of goats or of asses[2]; as for instance the three Nereids who are believed to dance together without pause on the heights of Taÿgetus. But this is a somewhat rare and local trait, and must have been transferred to them, it would seem, from Pan and his attendant satyrs, with whom of old they were wont to consort; in general they are held to be of beauty unblemished.

Their accomplishments include, besides singing and dancing, the humbler arts of the good housewife. 'She cooks like a Nereid' (*μαγειρεύει σὰ νεράϊδα*) and 'she does house-cleaning like a

[1] Cf. Passow, *Distich* 692; Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, vol. II. p. 233; Πανδώρα, XIV. p. 566; Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 104.

[2] Cf. Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 105.

Nereid' (*παστρεύει σὰν ἀνεράϊδα*) are phrases of commendation[1] occasionally heard. But chiefly do they excel in the art of spinning[2]; and so well known is their dexterity therein that a delicate kind of creeper with which trees are often festooned is known in the vulgar tongue under the pretty name of *νεραϊδογνέματα*, 'Nereid-spinnings.' The attribute indeed is natural and obvious; for the popular conception of the nymphs is but an idealisation of the peasant-women, to whom, whether sitting in the sunlight at their cottage-door or tending their sheep and goats afield, the distaff is an ever constant companion. But, easy though it is to account for the trait, some interest, if no great measure of importance, attaches to its consonance with the ancient characterisation of Nymphs. To the Nereids proper[3] a golden spindle was specially assigned; and in the cave of the Naiads in Ithaca might be seen, in Odysseus' day, the kindred occupation of weaving, for 'therein were great looms of stone whereon the nymphs wove sea-purple robes, a wonder to behold[4].'

As might be expected of beings so divinely feminine, their relations with men and with women are very different; in the one case there is the possibility of love; in the other the certainty of spite. It is necessary therefore to examine their attitude towards either sex separately.

The marriage of men with Nereids not only forms the theme of many folk-stories current in Greece, but in the more remote districts is still regarded as a credible occurrence. Even at the present day the traveller may hear of families in whose ancestry of more or less remote date is numbered a Nereid. A Thessalian peasant whom I once met claimed a Nereid-grandmother, and little as his looks warranted the assumption of any grace or beauty in so near an ancestor—he happened to have a squint—his claim appeared to be admitted by his fellow-villagers, and a certain prestige attached to him. Hence the epithet 'Nereid-born' (*νεραϊδογεννημένος* or *νεραϊδοκαμωμένος*) frequently heard in amatory distichs[5] may formerly have been not merely an exaggerated

[1] The latter is quoted by Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 106, from the dialect of Arachova near Delphi.
[2] Cf. Bern. Schmidt, *l. c.*; Bybilakis, *Neugriechisches Leben*, p. 13.
[3] Pind. *Nem.* v. 36.
[4] Hom. *Od.* 13. 102 ff.
[5] Cf. e.g. Passow, *Popularia Carmina*, Distichs 552–3.

compliment to the lady's beauty, but a recognition of high birth calculated to conciliate the future mother-in-law.

Nor is it men only whose susceptibilities are stirred by the beauty of the Nereids; even animals may fall under their spell. A shepherd of Scopelos told me that in the neighbouring island of Ioura, which he frequented with his flocks for pasturage, he once tamed a wild goat, which after a time began to behave very oddly. All night long it would remain with the rest of his flock, but in the daytime it persistently strayed away from the pasture to the neighbourhood of a Nereid-haunted cave on the bare and rocky hillside, and from want of food became very thin. The goat, he believed, was enamoured of a Nereid and pining away from unrequited love.

But it is from the old folk-stories rather than from the records of contemporary or recent experience that the character of the Nereids as lovers or wives is best learnt. And herein they are not models of womanhood; passion indeed they feel and inspire; they suffer, they even seek the caresses of the young and brave; but true wives they will not long remain. Constancy and care are not for them; the longing for freedom and the breezes of heaven, the memory of rapid tuneful dance, are hot within them; they leave the men whose strength and valour snared their hearts, they forsake their homes and children, and on the wings of the wind are gone, seeking again their etherial unwearied fellows. Yet they do not altogether forget their children; for motherhood is presently more to them than mirth; ever and anon they steal back to visit their homes and bless their children with the gifts of beauty and wealth which their touch can bestow, and even stay to mend their husbands' clothes and clean the house, vanishing again however before the man's return. Only in one case have I heard of a nymph's continued intimacy with a man throughout his life, and that strangely enough not in a folk-story but in recent experience. Their relations, it must be acknowledged, were illicit, for he had a human wife and family; but it was commonly reported that his rise from penury to affluence and the mayoralty of his native village was the work of a Nereid in a cave near by, who of her love for him enriched the produce of his land and shielded his flocks from pestilence.

In the popular stories which deal with the marriages of Nereids, the bridal fashion of their dress, which has already been noticed, is often an essential feature of the plot. In one tale it is

said explicitly that the supernatural quality of the Nereids lies not in their persons but in their raiment[1]; and for this reason a prince, smitten with love of the youngest of three sister Nereids but knowing not how to win her, is counselled by a wise woman, to whom he confides his perplexity, to lie in wait when they go to bathe in their accustomed pool and to steal the clothes of his *inamorata*, who would then follow him to recover her loss and so be in his power to take to wife. But there is greater delicacy and, as we shall see, more certain antiquity also in the commoner version of the episode, in which a kerchief alone is possessed of the magic powers ascribed above to the whole dress. And in this detail of costume the resemblance of bride and Nereid still holds good; for no wedding-dress would be complete without a kerchief either wrapped about the bride's head or pinned upon her breast or carried in her hand to form a link with her neighbour in the chain of dancers[2].

Of the stories which have for their *motif* the theft of such a kerchief from a Nereid[3] the following Messenian tale is a good example.

'Once upon a time there was a young shepherd who played the pipes so beautifully that the Nereids one night carried him off to the threshing-floor where they danced and bade him play to them. At first he was much afraid and thought that some evil would overtake him from being in their company and speaking with them. But gradually, as he grew accustomed to his strange surroundings and the Nereids showed themselves kind to him and grateful for his piping, he took courage again and night after night made his way to the spot which they haunted and made music till cock-crow.

Now it so happened that one of the Nereids was beautiful beyond the rest, and the shepherd loved her and determined to make her his wife. But inasmuch as the Nereids danced all night long without pause while he piped, and at dawn vanished to be seen no more until the next night's dance began, he knew not what to do.

[1] Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, vol. I. no. 15. 'Ihre ganze Kraft steckt aber in den Kleidern, und wenn man ihnen die wegnimmt, so sind sie machtlos.'

[2] To form a chain of dancers the leader, who occupies the extreme right, is linked to the second in the row by a kerchief, while the rest merely join hands. More freedom of motion is thus allowed to the chief performer.

[3] Cf. also Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, vol. II. no. 77. Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας, *Κυθνιακά*, p. 123.

So at last he went to an old woman and told her his trouble, and she said to him, "Go again to-night and play till dawn is near; then before the cock crows[1], make a dash and seize the kerchief in the Nereid's hand, and hold it fast. And though she change into terrible shapes, be not afraid; only hold fast until she take again her proper form; then must she do as thou wilt."

The young man therefore went again that night and played till close on dawn. Then as the Nereid passed close beside him, leading the dance, he sprang upon her and grasped the kerchief. And straightway the cock crew, and the other Nereids fled; but she whose kerchief he had seized could not go, but at once began to transform herself into horrible shapes in hope to frighten the shepherd and make him loose his hold. First she became a lion, but he remembered the witch's warning and held fast for all the lion's roaring. And then the Nereid turned into a snake, and then into fire[2], but he kept a stout heart and would not let go the kerchief. Then at last she returned to her proper form and went home with him and was his wife and bore him a son; but the kerchief he kept hidden from her, lest she should become a Nereid again.'

In this story there are two ancient traits especially noteworthy. The power of transformation into horrible shapes is precisely the means of defence which the Nereid Thetis once sought to employ against Peleus; the forms of wild beast and of fire, which she assumed according to ancient myth, are the same as Nereids now adopt; and the instructions now given to hold fast until the Nereid resume her proper shape are the same as Chiron, the wise Centaur, gave once to Peleus[3]. It is true that in the ancient story it is the person of Thetis that Peleus was bidden to grasp, while in the modern tale the shepherd's immediate object is to retain hold of the kerchief only. But this feature of the story too is an interesting witness to antiquity, although in Thetis' history it

[1] The crowing of the third cock is more usually the signal for the departure of Nereids and their kind. It is commonly held that the white cock crows first, the red second, and the black third. The last is a sure saviour from the assaults of all manner of demons.

[2] Similar transformations occur in a Cretan story, the forms assumed being those of dog, snake, camel, and fire. Χουρμούζης, Κρητικά, p. 69.

[3] Cf. Apollodorus, III. 13. 5.

does not appear. Ancient art has left to us several representations[1] of nymphs with veil-like scarves worn on the head or borne in the hand and floating down the breeze; and the magic properties inherent in them are exemplified by Ino's gift, or rather loan, to Odysseus. The scarf imperishable (*κρήδεμνον ἄμβροτον*) which she bade him gird about his breast and have no fear of any suffering nor of death, was not his own to keep after he reached the mainland; in accordance with her behest 'he loosed then the goddess' scarf from about him, and let it fall into the river's salt tide, and a great wave bore it back down the stream, and readily did Ino catch it in her hands'[2]. Here Ino's anxiety and strait command as to the return of her veil are most easily understood by the aid of the modern belief which makes the possession of the scarf or kerchief the sole, or at least the chief, means of godlike power. In Cythnos at the present day it is the *μπόλια*, or scarf worn about the head, which alone is believed to invest Nereids with their distinctive qualities[3]; and if the modern scarf is a lineal descendant of the Homeric type such as Ino wore—for even in feminine dress fashions are slow to change in the Greek islands[4]—the epithet 'imperishable' may have unsuspected force, as implying that the scarf confers a semblance of divinity on its owner and not *vice versa*.

In such of the stories of the above type as do not end with the marriage of the Nereid[5] the sequel is not encouraging to other adventurers. For though she be a good wife in commonplace estimation—and the Greek view of matrimony is in general commonplace to the verge of sordidness—though her skill in domestic duties be as proverbial as her beauty, she either turns her charms and her cunning to such account as to discover the hiding-place of her stolen kerchief, or, failing this, so mopes and pines over her work that her husband worn down by her sullenness and persistent silence decides to risk all if he can but restore her lightheartedness. Then though he have taken an oath of her

[1] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 104, quoting Ritschl, *Ino Leucothea*, Pl. I., II. (1 and 2), III.; and referring to a sarcophagus in the Corsini Gallery at Rome, figured in *Monum. Ined.* vol. VI. Pl. XXVI.

[2] Hom. *Od.* 5. 346 sqq. and 459 sqq.

[3] Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 123.

[4] The women of Scopelos on certain festal occasions wear a dress which may well be the same as the classical *ὀρθοστάδιον*, a loose pleated robe falling from the shoulders and widening as it falls, so that their figures resemble a fluted column too broad at the base and too tapering at the top.

[5] Hahn, *Griechische Märchen*, vol. II. no. 83. Χουρμούζης, Κρητικά, p. 69.

that she will not avail herself of her recovered freedom, but will abide with him as his wife, her promise is light as the breeze that bears her away with fluttering kerchief, and he is alone.

But fickleness is not the worst of the Nereids' qualities in their dealings with men. In malice they are as wanton as in love. Woe betide him who trespasses upon their midday carnival or crosses their nightly path; dumbness, blindness, epilepsy, and horrors of mutilation have been the penalties of such intrusion, though the man offend unwittingly; for the Nereids are tiger-like in all, in stealth and cruelty as in grace and beauty; and none who look upon their radiance can guess the darkness of their hearts. Terrible was the experience of a Melian peasant, who coming unawares upon the Nereids one night was bidden by them to a cave hard by, where they feasted him and made merry together and did not deny him their utmost favours; but when morning broke, they sent him to his home shattered and impotent.

If such be sometimes the results of their seeming goodwill and proffered companionship, how much more fearful a thing must be their enmity! Let a man but intrude upon their revels in some sequestered glen, or sleep beneath the tree that shelters them, or play the pipe beside the river where they bathe, and in such wrath they will gather about him[1], that the eyes which have looked upon them see no more, and the voice that cries out is thenceforth dumb, and madness springs of their very presence.

But if the Nereids are fickle and treacherous in their dealings with men, towards women they are consistently malicious. Especially on two occasions must every prudent peasant-woman be on her guard against their envy—at marriage and in child-birth. For though the Nereids themselves prove no true wives, so jealous are they of the joys of wedlock, that if a bride be not well secured from their molestation, they will mar the fruition of her love, or else, where they cannot prevent, they will endeavour at the least

[1] Cf. a folk-song quoted by Ross, *Reisen auf Inseln*, III. p. 180,

> Σὲ μονοδένδριν μὴ ἀναιβῇς, 'στοὺς κάμπους μὴ καταίβῃς,
> καὶ 'στὸν ἀπάνω ποταμὸν μὴ παίζῃς τὸ περνιαύλι,
> κὴ ἐρθοῦν καὶ μονομαζευθοῦν τοῦ ποταμοῦ 'νεράδες.

'Go not up to the solitary tree, go not down to the lowlands, beside the torrent above play not thy pipes, lest the Nereids of the stream come and swarm thick about thee.'

to cut short the happiness of motherhood, slaying with fever the woman whose bliss has stirred their malevolence, yet sparing always the child and even blessing it with beauty and wealth.

The means by which women most commonly protect themselves on these occasions are the wearing of amulets; the fastening of a bunch of garlic over the house-door; the painting of a cross in black upon the lintel (this custom may be a Christianised form of the ancient practice, mentioned by Photius[1], of smearing houses with pitch at the birth of children as a means of driving away powers of evil); and, if any strange visitants are heard about the house at night, the maintenance of strict silence. But steps are also sometimes taken to appease the Nereids; offerings of food, in which honey is the essential ingredient, are set out for them, and formerly in Athens[2] to this a bride used to add two chemises out of her trousseau.

Such precautions after a confinement are regularly continued for forty days. It would appear that in ancient times this was the period during which women were held to be specially exposed to the evil eye and all other ghostly and sinister influences[3], including probably, as now, the assaults of nymphs; and in modern usage the duration of the time of peril is so well established that the word *σαραντίζω*, literally to 'accomplish forty (*σαράντα*) days,' is used technically of the churching of women at the end of that period; while a more frankly pagan survival is to be found in the fact that for forty days no right-minded mother will cross the threshold of her own house to go out, nor enter a neighbour's house, without stepping on the door-key, that being the most easily available piece of iron, a metal, which in the folk-lore of ancient Greece[4], as in that of many other countries, was a charm and safeguard against the supernatural.

It is not however the mothers only, who need protection from the Nereids, but the children also, and that too throughout their childhood; yet not against the same perils; for the mother is liable to malicious injuries; the child is safe indeed from wilful hurt, but it may be stolen by Nereids. We have already seen how

[1] Lexicon, s.v. *ῥάμνος, ἐν ταῖς γενέσεσι τῶν παιδίων χρίουσι (πίττῃ) τὰς οἰκίας εἰς ἀπέλασιν τῶν δαιμόνων.*

[2] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, III. p. 32.

[3] Cf. Welcker, *Kleine Schriften*, 3. 197–9; Rohde, *Psyche*, I. p. 360, note 1.

[4] Cf. Hom. *Od.* XI. 48 ff. and Eustathius, *ad loc.*

Nereids who have wed with mortal men, though faithless to their husbands, are yet drawn home now and again by love of their children. And such of them too as have never yielded to human embrace are yet instinct with a strange yearning to possess a mortal woman's prettiest little ones; on one child they exert a fascination which unhappily proves fatal to it; another they seize with open violence; or again they set stealthily in some cradle a babe of pure Nereid birth—a changeling that by some weird fatality is weakly and doomed to die—and carry off to the woods and hills the human infant, in whom they delight, to be their playmate and their fosterling. In a history of the island of Pholegandros, the writer, a native of the place, accounts for the multitude of small chapels in the island on the ground of the peasants' anxiety each to have a saint close to his property to defend him from such raids by Nereids and other kindred beings[1].

The wife of a priest at Chalandri in Attica related to Ross[2] a story in point. 'I had a daughter,' she said, 'a little girl between twelve and thirteen years old, who showed a very strange disposition. Though we all treated her kindly, her mood was always melancholy, and whenever she got the chance she ran off from the village up the wooded spurs of the mountain (Brilessos). There she would roam about alone all day long, from early morning till late evening; often she would take off some of her clothes and wear but one light garment, so as to be less hindered in running and jumping. We dared not stop her, for we saw quite well that the Nereids had allured her, but we were much distressed. It was in vain that my husband took her time after time to the church and read prayers over her. The Panagia (the Virgin) was powerless to help. After the child had been thus afflicted a considerable while, she fell into yet deeper despondency, and at last died—a short time ago. When we buried her, the neighbours said, "Do not wonder at her death; the Nereids wanted her; it is but two days since we saw her dancing with them."'

Such was the view taken by a Greek priest and his wife concerning the cause of their daughter's death about two generations ago; and at the present day the traveller may hear of similar

[1] Ζ. Δ. Γαβαλᾶς, Ἡ νῆσος Φολέγανδρος, p. 29.
[2] *Reisen auf Inseln*, etc. III. pp. 181–2.

events in recent experience. An important point to notice is that the child's death was thought to be due, not to any malevolence on the part of the Nereids, but to their desire to have her for their own, a desire more happily gratified in cases of which I have several times heard where the child has not died but has simply disappeared. Thus in Arcadia I was once assured that a small girl had been carried off by Nereids in a whirlwind, and had been found again some weeks after on a lonely mountain side some five or six hours distant from her home in a condition which showed that she had been well fed and well cared for in the interval.

But certainly the snatching away of children by the Nereids, whether this mean death or only disappearance, is still a well-accredited fact in the minds of many of the common-folk. They still remain too simple and too closely wedded to the beliefs of their forefathers to need the old exhortation[1],

'Trust ye the fables of yore: 'tis not Death, but the Nymphs of the river
Seeing your daughter so sweet stole her to be their delight.'

They believe still that the Nereids have befriended their children, even while they weep for their own loss.

Whatever mischief the Nereids work upon man, woman, or child, be it death or loss of faculties or merely deportation from home to some haunted spot, 'seized' (*παρμένος* or *πιασμένος*) is the word applied to the victim. The compound *ἀναρᾳδοπαρμένος*[2], 'Nereid-seized,' also occurs, exactly parallel in form as well as equivalent in meaning to the ancient *νυμφόληπτος* as used by Plato. 'Now listen to me,' says Socrates to Phaedrus[3], 'in silence; for in very truth this seems to be holy ground, so that if anon, in the course of what I say, I suffer a "seizure" (*νυμφόληπτος γένωμαι*), you must not be surprised.' Such speech, save for its disregard of the acknowledged peril, might be held in all seriousness by a peasant of to-day. In Socrates' mouth it is intended merely as a happy metaphor; but its point and appropriateness are lost on those who do not both know the superstition to which he alludes and at the same time recall the *mise-en-scène*[4] of the dialogue.

[1] *C.I.G.*, no. 6201 (from Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, etc. p. 122 note). Τοῖς πάρος οὖν μύθοις πιστεύσατε· παῖδα γὰρ ἐσθλὴν | ἥρπασαν ὡς τερπνὴν Ναΐδες, οὐ Θάνατος.

[2] Ἐμ. Μανωλακάκης, Καρπαθιακά, p. 129. There are also compounds *ἐξωπαρμένος* and *ἀλλοπαρμένος* with the same meaning.

[3] Plato, *Phaedr.* xv. (238 D).

[4] *Ibid.* 229 A, B; 230 B; 242 A; 279 B.

The two friends have crossed the Ilissus and are stretched on a grassy slope in the shade of a lofty plane-tree, beneath which is a spring of cool water pleasant to their feet as is the light breeze to their faces in the heat of the summer noon. The spot must surely be a favourite haunt of the rural gods, and indeed the statues close at hand attest its dedication to Pan and to the Nymphs. In such a situation there would be, according to modern notions, three distinct grounds for apprehending a 'seizure.' The neighbourhood of water is throughout Greece dreaded as the most dangerous haunt of Nereids[1], so that few peasants will cross a stream or even a dry torrent-bed without making the sign of the cross. Hardly less risky is it to rest in the shade of any old or otherwise conspicuous tree. If in addition to this the time of day be noon, it is not merely venturesome to trespass on such spots, but inexcusably foolhardy; for the hour of midday slumber is fraught with as many terrors as the night[2]. Any or all of these popular beliefs may have been present to Plato's mind as he wrote this passage; for the ancients numbered among those Nymphs, by whom Socrates was likely to be 'seized,' both Naiads and Dryads, who might be expected to resent and to punish any intrusion upon their haunts in stream or tree; while, as regards the hour of noon, the fear felt in old time of arousing Pan[3] from his siesta may well have extended also to Nymphs, who on this spot beside the Ilissus, as commonly elsewhere, were named his comrades.

The same kind of 'seizure' was denoted formerly by the phrase ἔχει ἀπ' ἔξω[4], 'he has it (i.e. a stroke or seizure) from without,' and the modern compound 'ξωπαρμένος[5] bears obviously a kindred meaning. The exact significance of ἔξω in this relation is difficult to determine. Either it is only another example of the usage already noted in discussing the term ἐξωτικά and implies the activity of one of those supernatural beings who exist side by side with the powers of Christianity and are by their very name

[1] Cf. Leo Allatius, *De quor. Graec. opin.* cap. xx. 'potissimum si fluentis aquarum solum irrigetur.'

[2] To this belief I attribute the origin of the phrase ὥρα τὸν ηὗρε, 'an (evil) hour overtook him' (Leo Allatius, *op. cit.* xix.), employed euphemistically in reference to 'seizure' by the Nereids, and of the kindred imprecation, κακὴ ὥρα νά σ' εὕρῃ, 'may an evil hour overtake you' (Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 97), which gains in force and elegance by its reversal of an ordinary phrase of leave-taking, ὥρα καλή.

[3] See above, p. 79.

[4] Leo Allatius, *op. cit.* xix.

[5] From Epirus, Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 120. See above, p. 142, note 2.

proved to be pagan; or else it indicates a difference in the mode of injury by two classes of supernatural foes, the difference between 'seizure' and 'possession.' Certainly no story is known to me of 'possession' by Nereids in the same sense as by devils. The latter take up their abode within a man and are subject to exorcism; the seizure by Nereids is conceived rather as an external act of violence. This is made clear by several terms locally used of seizure. 'He has been struck' (*βαρέθηκε* or *χτυπήθηκε*), 'he has been wounded' (*λαβώθηκε*), 'he has had hands laid upon him' (*ἐγγίχτηκε*) are typical expressions, to which is sometimes added 'by Nereids' or 'by evil women[1].' Such phrases clearly convict the Nereids of assault and battery rather than of undue mental influence upon their victims.

Moreover the Nereids, and with them all the surviving pagan deities, are pictured by the peasant in corporeal form, whereas the angels—and there are bad angels, who 'possess' men, as well as good—are in common speech as well as in the formal dedications of churches known as *οἱ ἀσώματοι*, 'the Bodiless ones.' There is then an essential difference in the nature of these two classes of beings, which justifies the supposed distinction in their methods of working. For 'possession' proper is the injury inflicted, or rather infused, by spirits pure and simple; external 'seizure' is the work of corporeal beings. And this distinction was recognised in comparatively early times; for John of Damascus[2] in speaking of *στρίγγαι*, a peculiarly maleficent kind of witch (of whom more anon), notes as singular the fact that sometimes they appear clothed in bodily form and sometimes as mere spirits (*μετὰ σώματος ἢ γυμνῇ τῇ ψυχῇ*). It is then to the second interpretation of the phrase *ἔχει ἀπ' ἔξω*, as implying external and bodily violence, that the balance of argument, I think, inclines.

The precautions which may be taken against injury by Nereids have already been briefly noticed. Amulets, garlic, the sign of the cross, the invocation of saints—all these are common and suitable prophylactics. But above all, in the actual moment when imminent danger is suspected, the lips, as Phaedrus was reminded by Socrates, and also the eyes should be close shut; for in general the principle obtains that the particular organ

[1] Cf. Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 120.
[2] I. p. 473 (Migne, *Patrolog. Graeco-Lat.* vol. XCIV. p. 1604).

by which there is converse or contact with the Nereids is most likely to be impaired or destroyed. Apart from this, there is no precaution more specially adapted for self-defence against the Nereids than against the evil eye or any other baneful influence; and with these I have already dealt[1].

But when these precautions are neglected or fail, the mischief wrought by the Nereids is not necessarily permanent; there are several cures which may be tried. Sometimes prayers (but not, so far as I know, a formal exorcism such as the Greek Church provides for diabolic possession) are recited by a priest over the sufferer in the church of some suitable saint; or a trial may be made of sleeping in a church which possesses a wonder-working *icon*. Sometimes an offering of honey-cakes sent or carried to the spot where the misfortune occurred suffices to turn the Nereids from their wrath and wins them to undo the hurt that they have done; on such an errand however the bearer of the offering must beware of looking back to the place where he has once deposited it, lest a worse fate overtake him than that which he is trying to dispel[2]. Theodore Bent[3] gives full details of such an offering made in the island of Ceos. 'For those,' he writes, 'who are supposed to have been struck by the Nereids when sleeping under a tree, the following cure is much in vogue. A white cloth is spread on the spot, and on it is put a plate with bread, honey, and other sweets, a bottle of good wine, a knife, a fork, an empty glass, an unburnt candle, and a censer. These things must be brought by an old woman who utters mystic words and then goes away, that the Nereids may eat undisturbed, and that in their good humour they may allow the sufferer to regain his health.' How mystic may be the words of a Cean witch, I cannot say; but the formula to be used by mothers in Chios in the event of a similar misfortune to a child is extremely simple: 'Good day to you, good queens, eat ye the little cakes and heal my child'—*καλημέρα σας, καλαὶς ἀρχόντισσαις, φᾶτε σεῖς τὰ κουλουράκια καὶ 'γιάνετε τὸ παιδί μου*[4]. But the most frequent and most efficacious method of cure (with which the offering of honeycakes may be combined) is for the sufferer to revisit the scene of his calamity at

[1] See above, p. 13.
[2] Cf. Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, Vol. II. no. 80.
[3] *The Cyclades*, p. 457.
[4] Κωνστ. Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ 'Ανάλεκτα, p. 369.

the same hour of the same day in week, month, or year, when by some capricious reversal of fate the presence of the Nereids is apt to remove the hurt which it formerly inflicted.

Thus far I have dealt with the main characteristics of nymphs in general: it remains to consider the several classes into which they were anciently divided; and though for the most part the old appellations, Nereids, Naiads, Oreads, and Dryads, have either disappeared or else changed their form or meaning, we shall find that the old division of them into these four main classes according to their habitation still to some extent survives.

The Nereids, whose name is now extended to comprise all kinds of nymphs, are in the ancient and proper sense of the term among the rarest of whom the peasant speaks. But here and there mention is made of genuine sea-nymphs, and also of their queen, the Lamia of the Sea[1], who has superseded Amphitrite. In 1826 a villager of Argolis described to Soutzos, the historian of the Greek revolution[2], a true Nereid. Her hair was green and adorned with pearls and corals; often by moonlight she might be seen dancing merrily on the surface of the sea, and in the daytime she would come to dry her clothes upon the rocks near the mills of Lerna. These, I may add from my own knowledge, are reputed to be haunted by Nereids down to this day. Happily a peasant of that period cannot be suspected of any education; he was not recalling a piece of repetition mastered at school when he spoke of

viridis Nereidum comas[3],

but knew by tradition from his ancestors what Horace learnt of them by study.

In the Greek town of Sinasos also, in Cappadocia, a class of sea-nymphs is popularly recognised and distinguished under the name *Ζαβέται*, a word said by the recorder of it to be derived from a Cappadocian word *zab* meaning the 'sea[4].' But of the districts known to me the most fertile in stories of sea-nymphs is the province of Maina, the middle of the three peninsulas south of the Peloponnese. One such story attaches to a fine

[1] *ἡ Λάμια τοῦ πελάγου.* Cf. the periodical *Παρνασσός* IV. p. 773, and Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im Neuen*, p. 30. See also below, pp. 171 ff.

[2] *Histoire de la Révolution grecque*, p. 228 note.

[3] Hor. *Carm.* III. 28. 10.

[4] Ἰ. Σαραντίδου Ἀρχελάου, Ἡ Σινασός, p. 90.

palm-tree growing on the beach at Liméni, a small port on the west coast of the peninsula. A full version of it has been published[1], but as it is long and not peculiarly instructive, I content myself with an abridgement of it.

A fisherman of Liméni was sleeping one summer night in his boat; at midnight he suddenly awoke to find Nereids rowing him out to sea, but happily, remembering at once that Nereids drown any one whom they catch looking at them, he lay quiet as if asleep. The boat travelled like lightning, and soon they reached Arabia; and having shipped a cargo of dates, the Nereids started home again. As they were returning, one Nereid proposed to drown the man; but the others replied that he had not opened his eyes to see them, and that they owed him a debt besides for the use of his boat. Finally they arrived at some unknown place and unloaded the dates; and then in a flash the fisherman found himself back at the shore by the monastery of Liméni, and 'the she-devils, the Nereids,' gone. As he baled out his boat, he found one date; but suspecting that it had been left intentionally by the Nereids to cause him trouble, he threw it, not into the sea, for fear his fishing should suffer, but ashore. And since the date had been handled by supernatural beings (*'ξωτικά*), it could not perish, but took root where it fell; and hence the palm-tree on the shore to this day.

These same sea-nymphs—*θαλασσιναὶς νεράϊδες*—play also a part in the daily life of the people of this district[2]. It is said that every Saturday night these Nereids join battle with the Nereids of the mountains, and according as these or those win, their *protégés*, the upland or the maritime population, are found on Sunday morning in higher or lower spirits, booty-laden or despoiled. It is indeed an imaginative folk which can thus make its deities responsible for drunken brawls and sober thefts; but some of them have humour enough to smile at their own imaginings.

A class of maleficent beings known to the inhabitants of Tenos, Myconos, Amorgos, and other islands of the same group under the name of *ἀγιελοῦδες* or *γιαλοῦδες*[3], have been reckoned as sea-nymphs by several writers, who would derive the name from

[1] Εὐαγγελία Κ. Καπετανάκης, Λακωνικὰ Περίεργα, pp. 43 sqq.
[2] Cf. Παρνασσός, IV. p. 669 (1880).
[3] So according to Theodore Bent (*Cyclades*, p. 496) but perhaps inaccurately.

'γιαλός (i.e. αἰγιαλός), the 'sea-shore[1].' But there is no evidence advanced to show that the common-folk regard them as a species of Nereid; and there is, on the contrary, evidence of their identity with certain female demons whose name more commonly appears in the form γελλοῦδες[2], and with whom I shall deal later.

The Oreads are no longer known under their old name, but their existence is still recognised throughout the mainland of Greece. Their change of name is the result merely of a change in the ordinary word for 'mountain.' Anciently ὄρος was usual, βουνός rare; now the peasant uses commonly βουνό, and ὄρος although understood everywhere and occurring in popular poetry comes less readily to his lips. Hence the Oreads are now called ᾗ Βουνήσιαις[3] (sc. νεράϊδες) or τὰ κουρίτσια τοῦ βουνοῦ[4] ('the mountain-nymphs' or 'the maidens of the mount'). These mountain-nymphs delight in dance and merriment even more than their kin of the rivers and of the sea. In Maina indeed they seem to have become infected with the pugnacious character of the people, for as we have seen they there do battle with the sea-nymphs each Saturday night. But in general frolic is more to their taste than fighting. On the heights of Taÿgetus are three Oreads, well known to the dwellers in the plain of Sparta, who dance together without pause. On the summit of Hymettus too there is a flat space, called in the modern Attic dialect a πλάτωμα and in shape 'round like a threshing-floor,' where Nereids of the mountain dance at midday[5]. Above all in the uplands of Acarnania and Aetolia many are the hollows or tree-encircled level spaces which the shepherds will point out as νεραϊδάλωνα, 'threshing-floors' where the nymphs make merry; for a threshing-floor, it must be remembered, is the usual resort for dancing, wrestling, and all those amusements for which a level space is required.

Nymphs of the same kind are known also in Crete. A curious story of a wedding procession in which they took part was there

[1] So Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 101, following Βάλληνδας in Ἐφημερὶς τῶν Φιλομαθῶν, 1861, p. 1826; and Bent, *loc. cit.*

[2] In this view Prof. Πολίτης of Athens University, whom I consulted, concurs with me.

[3] Cf. Παρνασσός, IV. p. 669, Πολίτης, Μέλετη κ.τ.λ. p. 97.

[4] Cf. Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, etc. p. 101.

[5] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηναίων, I. p. 223.

narrated to Pashley[1], and his informant's words are recorded by him in the original dialect. 'Once upon a time a man told me that two men had once gone up to the highest mountain-ridges, where wild goats live, and sat by moonlight in a grassy hollow[2] (διασέλι), in the hopes of shooting the goats. And there they heard a great noise, and supposed that there were men come to get loads of snow to carry to Canea. But when they drew nearer, they heard violins and cithers and all kinds of music, and such music they had never heard. So they knew at once that these were no men but an assemblage of divine beings (δαιμονικὸ συνέδριον). And they watched them and saw them pass at a short distance from where they were sitting, clothed in all manner of raiment, and mounted some on grey horses and some on horses of other colours, and they could make out that there were men and women, afoot or riding, a very host. And the men were white as doves, and the women very beautiful like the rays of the sun. They saw too that they were carrying something in the way that a dead body is carried out. Forthwith the mountaineers determined to have a shot at them as they passed before them. They had heard also a song of which the words were

> "Go we to fetch a bride, a lady bride,
> From the steep rock, a bride that is alone."

And they made up their minds and fired a shot at them. Thereupon those that were in front cried out with one voice, "What is it?" and those behind answered, "Our bridegroom is slain, our bridegroom is slain." And they wept and cried aloud and fled.'

In regard to this story it may be noted that a male form of Nereid (Νεραΐδης) is sometimes mentioned, and here such are undoubtedly implied. The necessity of finding husbands for the Nereids naturally presents itself to the minds of the old women who are the chief story-tellers, and the demand is met by an assorted supply of young men, male Nereids, and devils. As consorts of the last-mentioned, the Nereids enjoy in many places the title of διαβόλισσαις, 'she-devils'; and it was on the ground of such unions that a peasant-woman of Acarnania once explained to me the belief, held in her own village, that Nereids were seen

[1] *Travels in Crete*, II. pp. 232–4.

[2] I cannot vouch for the accuracy of my translation of this word, which I have never seen or heard elsewhere.

only at midday. How should the devils their husbands let such beautiful women be abroad at night?

It is on the mountain-nymphs also that the peasants most frequently lay the responsibility for whirlwinds[1], by which children or even adults are said to be caught up and carried from one place to another[2], or to their death. Some such fate, we must suppose, in ancient times also was held to have befallen a seven-year-old boy on whose tomb was written, 'Tearful Hades with the help of Oreads made away with me, and this mournful tomb that has been builded nigh unto the Nymphs contains me[3].' The habit of travelling on a whirlwind, or more correctly perhaps of stirring up a whirlwind by rapid passage, has gained for the nymphs in some districts secondary names—in Macedonia *ἀνεμικαίς*, in Gortynia *ἀνεμογαζοῦδες*[4]—which might almost seem to constitute a new class of wind-nymphs. But so far as I know the faculty of raising whirlwinds, though most frequently exercised by Oreads, is common to all nymphs.

In Athens whirlwinds are said to occur most frequently near the old Hill of the Nymphs[5]: and women of the lower classes, as they see the spinning spiral of dust approach, fall to crossing themselves busily and to repeating *μέλι καὶ γάλα 'στὴ στράτα σας*[6] (or *'στο δρόμο σας*), 'Honey and milk in your path!' This incantation is widely known as an effective safeguard against the Nereids in their rapid flight, and must in origin, it would seem, have been a vow. This supposition is confirmed by the fact that in Corfu[7] a few decades ago the peasantry used to make actual offerings of both milk and honey to the Nereids, and that Theocritus also associates these two gifts in vows made to the nymphs and to Pan. 'I will set,' sings Lacon, 'a great bowl of white milk for the nymphs, and another will I set full of sweet oil'; to which Comatas in rivalry rejoins, 'Eight pails of milk will I set for Pan, and eight dishes of honey in the honeycomb[8].' The gift of honey is of special significance. In every recorded case which

[1] Cf. Leo Allatius, *op. cit.* cap. xix.
[2] Cf. *Ἰον. Ἀνθολογία*, III. p. 509. Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, vol. II. no. 81.
[3] *C.I.G.* no. 997 (from Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 122 note).
[4] *Παρνασσός*, IV. p. 765. The origin of the second part of the compound is unknown.
[5] *Ἀρχαιολογικὴ Ἐφημερίς*, 1852, p. 647.
[6] Cf. *Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, III. p. 156.
[7] Theotokis, *Détails sur Corfou*, p. 123.
[8] Theocr. *Id.* v. 53–4 and 58–9.

I know of offerings to Nereids in modern Greece honey is expressly mentioned, and seems indeed to be essential; and it is probably from their known preference for this food that at Kastoria in Macedonia they have even received the by-name, *ἡ μελιτένιαις*, the honeyed ones[1].' And if we look back over many centuries we may find a hint of the same belief in Homer's description of the cave of the Naiads in Ithaca, wherein 'are bowls for mixing and pitchers of stone, and there besides do bees make store[2].' For it is well established that honey was the special offering made to the indigenous deities of Greece before the making of wine such as Homer's heroes quaff had yet been discovered[3]. Perchance then even in distant pre-Homeric days men vowed, as now they vow, honey and milk to the nymphs whose swift passing was the whirlwind, and felt secure.

The memory of the tree-nymphs is still green throughout Greece. From Aegina their ancient name *δρυάδες* is recorded as still in use[4]; and in parts of Epirus, Thessaly, Macedonia, and Thrace, as well as in several islands of the Aegean Sea, Chios, Cimolos, Cythnos, and others, there is a word employed which is, I believe, formed from the same root and once denoted the same class of beings. This word is found in the forms *δρύμαις*[5], *δρύμιαις*[6], *δρύμναις*[7], *δρύμνιαις*[8] and, in Chios, in a neuter form *δρύματα*[9].

It has been suggested indeed by one writer[10] that this word has nothing to do with Dryads, but that its root is *δρυμ-* (better perhaps written *δριμ-* as in the ancient *δριμύς*, since, so far as the sound of the vowel in modern Greek is concerned, the philologist may write *η*, *ι*, *υ*, *ει*, *οι*, or *νι*, as seemeth him best), in the sense of 'fierce,' 'bitter'; and support for this derivation is sought in a somewhat vague statement of Hesychius who explains the word *δρυμίους* by the phrase *τοὺς κατὰ τὴν χώραν κακοποιούς*, 'the

[1] Kindly communicated to me by Mr Abbott, author of *Macedonian Folklore*.
[2] Hom. *Od.* XIII. 105–6.
[3] See Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the study of Greek Religion*, p. 423.
[4] *Οἰκονόμος*, *Περὶ προφορᾶς*, p. 768.
[5] *Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας*, *Κυθνιακά*, p. 131 and *Σκαρλάτος*, *Λεξικὸν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἑλληνικῆς γλώσσης*, s.v. *δρίμαις*.
[6] *Σκορδίλης*, in *Πάνδωρα*, XI. p. 472; cf. Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 130.
[7] Cited by Bern. Schmidt, *ibid.* from *Βρετός*, *Ἐθν. Ἡμερολ.* 1863, p. 55. This reference I have been unable to verify.
[8] In Macedonia.
[9] *Κωνστ. Καρελλάκης*, *Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα*, p. 359.
[10] Wachsmuth in *Rhein. Mus.* 1872.

evil-doers in the country': but whether he took δρυμίους to be the proper name of some class of demons, or an adjective synonymous with κακοποιούς, does not appear.

But even on the grounds of form alone (which grounds will be considerably strengthened when we come to consider signification), it appears better to derive this group of words from δρῦς or more immediately from δρυμός, 'a coppice'; for in ancient literature mention is made of 'Artemis of the coppice' and 'nymphs of the coppice' (Ἄρτεμις δρυμονία[1] and δρυμίδες νύμφαι)[2], of a particular nymph named Drymo[3], of a Ζεὺς δρύμνιος[4] worshipped in Pamphylia, and of Apollo invoked at Miletus under the title δρύμας[5]. In the last two instances the title may be supposed to have had reference merely to the surroundings of a particular sanctuary; but in relation to Artemis and the nymphs the epithet clearly suggests their woodland haunts.

In present-day usage the words which we are considering almost universally denote, not nymphs or any other supernatural beings, but the first few days of August, which are observed in a special way. The number of these days varies from three in Sinasos[6], in Carpathos[7], and in Syme (an island north of Rhodes), to five in Cythnos[8] and Cyprus[9], and six in most other places where they are specially observed. There are two rules laid down for this observance, though in some places only one of the two is in force: no tree may be peeled or cut (this is the usual practice for obtaining mastic and resin); and the use of water for washing either the person or clothes is prohibited; neither is it permitted to travel by water during this period. In the interests of personal cleanliness it is unfortunate that the month of August should have been selected for this abstention; by that time even the Greeks find the sea tepid enough to admit of bathing without serious risk of chill, and it is a pity therefore that a penalty should be inflicted upon bathers during the first week of the only month in which ablutions extend beyond the pouring of a small jug of water over the fingers. Howbeit the

[1] *Orph. Hymns*, 36 (35), 12. [2] Alexis, *Fragm. Fab. Incert.* 69.
[3] Verg. *Georg.* IV. 336. [4] Tzetzes, *Lycophron*, 536. [5] *ibid.* 522.
[6] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, Ἡ Σινασός, p. 85.
[7] Ἐμ. Μανωλακάκης, Καρπαθιακά, p. 189. In Carpathos however the three middle and three last days of August are added.
[8] Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 131.
[9] Σακελλάριος, Κυπριακά, vol. I. p. 710.

decrees stand, and as surely as there is transgression thereof, skin will blister and peel off, clothes will rot[1], and trees will wither. The severity of these pains has in Cyprus changed the name of these days from δρύμαις into κακαουσκιαίς, 'the evil days of August[2].'

Now among a people so superstitious as the Greeks it is reasonable to suppose that days thus marked by special abstinences were originally sacred to some deities. Washing and tree-cutting at this season must, we may assume, have been offences against some supernatural persons whose festival was then observed and who avenged its profanation; and the supernatural persons most nearly concerned would naturally be the tree-nymphs and the water-nymphs.

The association or even confusion of these two classes of nymphs is very common both in ancient literature and in modern belief, and is indeed a natural consequence of the fact that the finest trees, such as that plane under which sat Socrates and Phaedrus, grow only in the close vicinity of water. It would have puzzled even Socrates to say whether the Nymphs by whom he might be seized would be more probably Dryads or Naiads. Homer himself, to go yet further back, suggests the same association, for he tells of 'a spreading olive-tree and nigh thereto' the cave of the Naiads in Ithaca. Again in later times we find a dedication by one Cleonymus to 'Hamadryads, daughters of the river'[3]; and though an ingenious critic would replace Ἁμαδρυάδες by Ἀνιγριάδες (nymphs of the Arcadian river Anigrus), I believe the fault to lie with Cleonymus and not with the manuscript; for the place where he makes his dedication is beneath pine-trees (ὑπαὶ πιτύων). At the present day the same tendency towards confusion of the two classes is common. This was well illustrated to me by some peasants of Tenos. Ten minutes' walk from the town there is a good spring from which a remarkable subterranean passage cut through the solid rock carries the water

[1] Theodore Bent (*Cyclades*, p. 174) says that the word δρύμαις is used in Sikinos to mean actually the sores on limbs, and in other islands the holes in linen caused by washing during Aug. 1—6. But as he appears to have been unaware that δρύμαις usually means the days themselves, I question the accuracy of his statement.

[2] Σακελλάριος, Κυπριακά, I. p. 710, who derives the word from κακὸς and Α(ὔγ)ουστος.

[3] *Anthol. Palat.* VI. 189.

to supply the town. The spring is within a cave, artificially enlarged at the entrance, over which stands a fine fig-tree. Standing outside while a companion entered first, I noticed that our guides (for several persons had escorted us out of curiosity or hospitality) were distinctly perturbed, and I heard one say to another, 'See, he is going in, he is not afraid.' Inferring thence that the place was haunted, and remembering that mid-day, the hour at which we happened to be there, was fraught with special peril, I determined to test my guides, and so sat down under the fig-tree. Then remarking that the sun was hot at noon, I invited them to come and sit in the shade and smoke a cigarette. But the bait was insufficient; they would stand in the sun rather than approach either the spring or the tree, though they were ready enough to accept cigarettes when I moved out of the zone of danger. Afterwards by enquiries made elsewhere I learnt that the spot was the reputed home of Nereids—but whether their abode was tree or water, who should say? Close neighbours in their habitations, indistinguishable in their appearance and attributes, it is pardonable to confuse those sister nymphs,

'Centum quae siluas, centum quae flumina seruant[1].'

It is exactly this kind of confusion of the two classes of nymphs which has produced the twofold injunctions for the observance of the days known as δρύμαις: for evidence is forthcoming that this word originally denoted a class of nymphs and not, as generally now, their August festival. From Stenimachos in Thrace comes the statement that by δρύμαις the people there understand female deities who live in water and are always hostile to man, but specially dangerous only during the first six days of August[2]. Here the name δρύμαις, if the derivation which I prefer is right, points to the identification of these beings with the ancient Dryads; while their watery habitations proclaim them rather Naiads. Reversely again in Syme, where the word δρύμαις is not in use, there are certain nymphs known as Ἀλουστίναι who live in mountain-torrents, in trees, and elsewhere, and who are seen only at mid-day and at midnight during the first three days of August; but, far from being hurtful to men, they may even themselves be captured by certain magical ceremonies and employed as

[1] Verg. *Georg.* IV. 383.

[2] Σκορδίλης, in Πανδώρα, XI. p. 472.

servants in the house for a period, after which the spell is broken and they return again to their homes. Their name Ἀλουστίναι[1], said to be formed from Ἀλούστος[1], the local name for the month of August, clearly means 'anti-washing,' and at once identifies them with those Naiads whose festival, as I believe, has rendered the waters sacred and therefore harmful if disturbed during these days; but on the other hand their dwelling-places include trees. These two pieces of evidence from places so wide apart as Stenimachos and Syme are reinforced by a popular expression formerly, and perhaps still, in use, τὸν ἔπιασαν ἡ δρύμαις[2], 'the "drymes" have seized him'; where the word denoting 'seizure' is one of those already noted as proper to 'seizure' by nymphs.

From the usage of the word therefore as well as from its formation we may conclude that the word δρύμαις is the modern equivalent of the ancient δρυάδες: and the widely-spread custom of abstaining both from tree-cutting and from the use of water during the early days of August is a survival of an old joint festival of wood-nymphs and water-nymphs.

But it is not in the relics of ancient worship only that traces of the Dryads are now to be found. The traveller in Greece will commonly hear that such and such a tree is haunted by a Nereid. Particularly famous in North Arcadia is a magnificent pine-tree on the path from the monastery of Megaspélaeon to the village of Solos. My muleteer enthusiastically compared it to the gigantic tree which is believed to uphold the world; and piously crossed himself, as we passed it, for fear of the nymph who made it her home. In general the trees thus reputed are the fruit-bearing trees which were comprehensively denoted by the term δρῦς, from which the Dryads took their name—the fig-tree, the olive, the holly-oak[3], and the plane. Such trees, especially when conspicuous for age or for luxuriance, are readily suspected to be the abode of Nereids. One Nereid only, it would seem, is assigned to each tree (though, if her retreat be violated, she may swiftly call others

[1] I give both these words as I received them, but cannot account for the abnormal accents. Ἄλουστος and either Ἀλουστιναίς or Ἀλούστιναις would be usual. As regards the whole form Ἀλούστος, it cannot I think be a dialectic change of Αὔγουστος, but is probably a pun upon it with reference to the custom of not washing during the first days of the month.

[2] Σκαρλάτος, Λεξικόν, s.v. δρίμαις.

[3] Modern πρινάρι, ancient πρῖνος.

of her kind to aid her in taking vengeance), and with the life of the tree her own life is bound up.

For a nymph is not immortal. Her span of life far exceeds that of man, but none the less it is measured. 'A crow lives twice as long as a man, a tortoise twice as long as a crow, and a Nereid twice as long as a tortoise.' Such is a popular saying which I heard from an unlettered peasant of Arcadia, to whom evidently had been transmitted orally through many centuries a version of Hesiod's lines, 'Verily nine times the age of men in their prime doth the croaking raven live; and a stag doth equal four ravens; and 'tis three lives of a stag ere the crow grows old; but the phoenix hath the life of nine crows; and ye, fair-tressed Nymphs, daughters of aegis-bearing Zeus, do live ten times the phoenix' age[1].' Commenting on this passage, Plutarch takes the word γενεά in the phrase ἐννέα γενεὰς ἀνδρῶν ἡβώντων, which I have rendered as 'nine times the age of men in their prime,' to be used as the equivalent of ἐνιαυτός, a year; and, making a sober computation on this basis, discovers that the limit of life for nymphs and *daemones* in general is 9720 years. But he then admits that the mass of men do not allow so long a duration, and quotes by way of illustration a phrase from Pindar, νύμφας...ἰσοδένδρου τέκμωρ αἰῶνος λαχούσας, according to which the nymphs are allotted a term of life commensurate with that of a tree; hence, it is added, the compound name Ἁμαδρυάδες, Dryads whose lives are severally bound up with those of the trees which they inhabit[2]. Other ancient authorities concur. Sophocles markedly calls the nymphs of Mt Cithaeron 'long-lived' (μακραιῶνες), not 'immortal'[3]: Pliny certifies the finding of dead Nereids on the coasts of Gaul during the reign of Augustus[4]: Tzetzes cites from the works of Charon of Lampsacus the story of an Hamadryad who was in danger of being swept away and drowned by a swollen mountain-torrent[5]: and, to revert to yet earlier authority, in one of the Homeric Hymns Aphrodite rehearses to Anchises the whole matter[6]. Speaking of the son whom she will bear to him, she says: 'So soon as he shall see the light of the sun, he shall be tended by

[1] Hesiod, *Fragm. apud* Plutarch. *De Orac. Defect.* p. 415.
[2] Cf. also Schol. *ad* Apoll. Rhod. II. 479, where Mnesimachus is quoted for the same opinion.
[3] *O. T.* 1099.
[4] *Nat. Hist.* IX. cap. 5.
[5] *Lycophron*, 480.
[6] *Hom. Hymns*, III. 256 sqq.

deep-bosomed nymphs of the mountains, even those that dwell upon this high and holy mount. These verily are neither of mortal men nor of immortal gods. Long indeed they live and feed on food divine, and they have strength too for fair dance amid immortals; yea, and with them have the watchful Slayer of Argus and such as Silenus been joined in love within the depths of pleasant grots. But at the moment of their birth, there spring up upon the nurturing earth pines, may be, or oaks rearing high their heads, good trees and luxuriant, upon the mountain-heights. Far aloft they tower; sanctuaries of immortals they are called, and men hew them not with axe[1]. But so soon as the doom of death stands beside them, first the good trees are dried up at the root and then their bark withers about them and their branches fall away, and therewith the soul of the nymphs too leaves the light of the sun.'

So my Arcadian friend was true to ancient tradition both in his estimate of the life of Nereids and in his belief, thereby implied, that they are mortal. Nor is other modern testimony wanting. There are popular stories still current concerning Nereids' deaths. One has been recorded in which a Nereid is struck by God with lightning and slain as a punishment for stealing a boy from his father, and her sister nymphs in terror restore the child[2]. A pertinent confession of faith has also been heard from the lips of a Cretan peasant. In explanation of the name Νεραϊδόσπηλος, 'Nereid-grot,' attached to a cave near his village, he had related a story of a Nereid who was carried off from that spot and taken to wife by a young man, to whom she bore a son; but as she would never open her lips in his presence, he went in despair to an old woman who advised him to heat an oven hot and then taking the child in his arms to say to the Nereid, 'Speak to me; or I will burn your

[1] ἑστᾶσ' ἠλίβατοι· τεμένη δέ ἑ κικλήσκουσιν
ἀθανάτων· τὰς δ' οὔτι βροτοὶ κείρουσι σιδήρῳ.

These two lines (267–8) have fallen under suspicion because, it is urged, the word ἀθανάτων is in direct contradiction of what has been said as to the intermediate position of nymphs between mortals and immortals. This criticism is due to careless reading. The lines do not mean that each tree is called the τέμενος of an immortal nymph, but that a number of trees, each inhabited by a nymph, often form together the τέμενος of an immortal god. A sanctuary of Artemis, for example, might well be surrounded by trees which each harboured one of her attendant nymphs.

[2] Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, II. no. 84. Cf. also no. 58.

child,' and so saying to make show of throwing the child into the oven. He did as the old woman advised; but the Nereid saying only, 'You hound, leave my child alone,' seized it from him and disappeared. And since the other Nereids would not admit her again to their company in the cave, as being now a mother, she took up her abode in a spring close by; and there she is seen two or three times a year holding the child in her arms. 'After hearing this tale,' says the recorder of it, 'I asked the old peasant who told it me, how long ago this had happened.' He replied that he had heard it from his grandfather, and guessed it to be about a hundred and sixty years. 'My good man,' said the other, 'would not the child have grown up in all that time?' 'What do you suppose, sir?' he answered; 'are those to grow up so easily who live from a thousand to fifteen hundred years?[1]'

How this period was computed by the Cretan peasant, or whether it was computed at all on any system known to him, is not related; but very probably the longevity of trees was the original basis of the calculation; for the peasants will often point out some old contorted olive-trunk as a thousand or more years old; I was once even taken to see a tree reputed to have been planted by Alexander the Great. But at any rate it is clear that both in ancient and in modern times the nymphs have always been believed to be subject to ultimate death, and however the tenure of life may be determined in the case of the others, the Dryads have without doubt been generally reckoned coeval with the trees that are their homes.

An exception to this rule must however be made in the case of Nereid-haunted trees which do not die a natural death, but are felled untimely. A Nymph's life is not to be cut short by a humanly-wielded axe. In the Homeric Hymn indeed, which I have quoted, we learn that men hew not such trees with steel; and the same might, I think, be said at the present day with certainty of those trees which are known to be haunted. But the unknown is ever full of risk; and the woodcutter of the North Arcadian forests, mindful of the sacrilege which he may commit and fearful of the vengeance wherewith it may be visited, takes such precautions as piety suggests. With muttered appeals to the Panagia or his own patron-saint and with much crossing of himself he fills up the

[1] Χουρμούζης, Κρητικά, pp. 69, 70.

moments between each bout of hewing at any suspected tree (unfortunately the finest timber on which he plies his axe is also the most likely to harbour a Nereid) and finally as the upper branches sway and the tree trembles to its fall, he runs back and throws himself down with his face to the ground, in silence which not even a prayer must break, lest a Nereid, passing out from her violated abode, hear and espy and punish. For, as has been said before, nothing is more sure than that he who speaks in the hearing of a Nereid loses from thenceforth the power of speech; while the practice of hiding the face in the ground is not a foolish imitation of the ostrich, but is prompted by the belief that a Nereid is most prone to injure those who by look, word, or touch have of their own act, though not always of their own will, placed themselves in communication or contact with her[1].

These precautions appertaining to the lore of modern Greek forestry indicate a belief that, when a tree is hewn down, its death does not involve the death of the Nereid within it, but that she escapes alive and vengeful. And herein once more there is agreement between the beliefs of modern and of ancient Greece. Apollonius Rhodius tells the story of the want and penury which befell Paraebius for all his labours. 'Verily he was paying a cruel requital for the sin of his father; who once when he was felling trees, alone upon the mountains, made light of the prayers of an Hamadryad. For she with tears and passionate speech strove to soften his heart, that he should not hew the trunk of her coeval oak, wherein she lived continuously her whole long life; but he right foolishly did fell the tree, in pride of his young strength. Wherefore the Nymph set a doom of fruitless toil thereafter on him and on his children[2].'

The Naiads, of whose ancient name, so far as I know, no trace remains in the dialects of to-day, are not less numerous than other nymphs and as much to be feared. The peasants speak of them usually as 'Nereids of the river' or 'of the spring' (*νεράϊδες τοῦ ποταμίου* or *τῆς βρύσης*); and only in one place, Kephalóvryso ('Fountain-head') in Aetolia, did I find a distinctive by-name for

[1] This belief however is not universal in Greece; in some few districts a Nereid now, like a wolf in ancient times, is safer seen first than seeing first.

[2] Apoll. Rhod. *Argon.* II. 477 sqq.

them. This was the word ξεραμμέναις[1], which I take to be a half-humorous euphemism meaning 'the Parched Ones'; but, so far as sound is concerned, it would be equally permissible to write 'ξεραμέναις (past participle of 'ξερνῶ = Latin *respuo*) and to interpret therefore in the sense of 'the Abominable Ones.' The latter appellation however seems to me too outspoken in view of the awe in which the Naiads are everywhere held.

Wherever fresh water is, whether in mountain-torrent or reservoir, in river or village-well, there is peril to be feared; no careful mother will send her children at noontide to fetch water from the spring, or, if they are sent, they must at least spit thrice into it before they dip their pitchers, nor will she suffer them to loiter beside a stream when dusk has fallen; no cautious man will ford a river without crossing himself first on the brink.

The actual dwelling-place of these nymphs may be either the depths of the water itself or some cave beside the stream. Homer gave to the Naiads of Ithaca for their habitation a grotto, wherein were everflowing waters[2]; and though in some cases the nymphs who haunt the mountain caves may as well be Oreads as Naiads, I have preferred to deal with them in this place; for usually it is river-gods who have hollowed out these rocky homes for their daughters, and in many such caves may be seen the everflowing waters that attest the Naiads' birthright.

Some such places, whether springs or caves, have, as might be expected, attained greater fame or notoriety than others; some special incident starts a story about them which from generation to generation rolls on gathering it may be fresh volume.

A typical story—typical save only for the absence of tragedy, since the Naiads are wont to drown by mistake those whom they carry off—was heard by Leo Allatius[3] from what he considered a trustworthy source. 'Some well-to-do people of Chios were taking a summer holiday in the country *en famille*, when a pretty little girl of the party got separated from the rest and ran off to a well at a little distance. Amusing herself, as children will, she leant forward over the well, and as she was looking at the water in it, was, without perceiving it, insensibly lifted by some force

[1] i.e. past participle passive of ξεραίνω (anc. ξηραίνω).
[2] Hom. *Od.* XIII. 103–4.
[3] *De quorumdam Graec. opinat.* cap. XIX.

and pushed into the well. Her relations saw her carried off, and running up, perceived the girl amusing herself on the top of the water as if she were seated on a bed. Thereupon her father, emboldened by the sight, tried to climb down into the well, but was pulled in by some force and set beside his child. In the meantime some of the others had brought a ladder, which they lowered into the well and bade the man ascend. Catching up his daughter in his arms, he mounted the ladder safe and sound, and to the amazement of all, though father and daughter had been all that time in the water, they came out with clothes perfectly dry, without so much as a trace of dampness. The seizure of the girl and her father they attributed to Nereids, who were said to haunt that well. The girl too herself asserted that while she was hanging over the well, she had seen women sporting on the surface of the water with the utmost animation, and at their invitation had voluntarily thrown herself in.'

This story, though it ends happily, bears a marked resemblance to that of Hylas. It is specially noted that the child had a pretty face, and this without doubt is conceived as impelling the Nereids to seize her. It is of little consequence that their home is, in this case, a mere well instead of 'a spring,' as Theocritus[1] pictures it, 'in a hollow of the land, whereabout grew rushes thickly and purple cuckoo-flower[2] and pale maidenhair and bright green parsley and clover spreading wide'; for the ancients also attributed nymphs to their wells[3].

Such stories are sometimes causes, sometimes effects, of the not uncommon place-names *νεραϊδόβρυσι*, *νεραϊδόσπηλῳο*[4], 'Nereid-spring,' 'Nereid-cave.'

Two such caves, to which the additional interest attaches of having been in classical times also regarded as holy ground, are found on Parnassus and on Olympus. The former is the famous Corycian cave sacred in antiquity to Pan and the Nymphs[5] and

[1] *Id.* XIII. 39 sqq.

[2] So I translate *χελιδόνιον* on the authority of a muleteer whom I hired at Olympia; the modern form is *χελιδόνι*. It may be added that in Greece the cuckoo-flower is often of a dark enough shade to justify the epithet *κυάνεον*.

[3] Artem. *Oneirocr.* II. 27.

[4] Cf. Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 102. Χουρμούζης, Κρητικά, p. 69. Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος, II. p. 122.

[5] Inscription on rock at entrance now barely legible. Cf. Paus. X. 32. 5, Strabo IX. 3, Aesch. *Eum.* 22.

still dreaded by the inhabitants of the district as an abode of Nereids[1]. The latter is thought to be the ancient sanctuary of the Pierian Muses, and the peasants of the last generation held the place in such awe that they refused to conduct anyone thither for fear of being seized with madness[2]. It is right to add that the tenants of this cavern were called by the vague name ἐξωτικαίς, which would comprise not only Nereids, but presumably the Muses also, if any remembrance of them survives in the district; but the fear of being seized with madness suggests the ordinary conception of nymphs. In neither of these instances of course can it be claimed that Naiads rather than Oreads are the possessors of the cave; but as I have said the peasants generally employ the wide appellation 'Nereids' or some yet vaguer name, and do not discriminate between the looks and the qualities of the several orders of nymphs. It is only by observing local and occasional distinctions that I have been able to trace some survivals of the four main ancient classes. In general the 'Nereid' of to-day is simply the 'Nymph' of antiquity.

## § 10. The Queens of the Nymphs.

Travelling once in a small sailing-boat from the island of Scyros to Scopelos I overheard an instructive conversation between one of my two boatmen and a shepherd whom we had taken off from the small island of Skánzoura. The occasion of our touching there, namely pursuit by pirates (from whom the North Aegean is not yet wholly free, though their piracies are seldom of a worse nature than cattle-lifting from the coasts and islands), had certainly had an exciting effect upon my boatman's nerves, and, as darkness fell, the shepherd responded to his companion's mood, and their talk ranged over many strange experiences. Very soon they were exchanging confidences about the supernatural beings with whom they had come into contact; and among these figured two who are the queens respectively of the nymphs of land and of sea. Of these deities one only was known to each of the speakers, but on comparing notes they agreed that the two personalities were distinct.

[1] Cf. Ulrichs, *Reisen und Forschungen in Griechenland*, I. p. 119, Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 103.

[2] Heuzey, *Le mont Olympe et l'Acarnanie*, pp. 204–5.

The landsman told of one whom he named 'the queen of the mountains' (ἡ *βασίλισσα τῶν βουνῶν*) who with a retinue of Nereids was ever roaming over the hills or dancing in some wooded dell. In form she was as a Nereid, but taller and more glistening-white than they; and as she surpassed her comrades in beauty, so did she also excel in cruelty towards those who heedlessly crossed her path. The sailor on the other hand had both seen and heard one whom he called 'the queen of the shore' (ἡ *βασίλισσα τοῦ γιαλοῦ*). Most often she stands in the sea with the water waist-high about her, and sings passionate love-songs to those who pass by on the shore. Then must men close fast their eyes and stop their ears; for, if they yield to her seductions, the bridal bed is in the depths of the sea and she alone rises up again to tempt yet others with her fatal love.

The former is without question she of whom Homer sang, 'In company with her do mirthful nymphs...range o'er the land. ...High above them all she carries her head and brow, and full easily is she known, though they all be beautiful'[1].

Nigh on three thousand years ago was composed this graceful epitome of beliefs still current to-day; for, though the name of Artemis is no longer heard, her personality remains. The peasants in general describe rather than name her. In Zacynthos she is called 'the great lady' (ἡ *μεγάλη κυρά*)[2]; in Cephalonia and in the villages of Parnassus she is distinguished simply as 'the chief' or 'the greatest' of the Nereids[3]; in either Chios or Scopelos (I cannot say which, for my shepherd had been born in the former but was then living in the latter) her title is 'Queen of the mountains.' In Aetolia however I was fortunate enough to hear an actual name assigned, ἡ *κυρὰ* Κάλω, 'the lady Beautiful,' where the shift of the accent in Κάλω as compared with the adjective *καλός* is natural to the formation of a proper name, and the feminine termination in *-ω*, almost obsolete now, argues an early origin. The name therefore in its present form may have come down unchanged from classical times; but, whatever its age, we may at least hear in it an echo of the ancient cult-title of

[1] Hom. *Od.* VI. 105.

[2] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 107. The title ἡ *μεγάλη κυρά* must not be confused with the title ἡ *κυρὰ τοῦ κόσμου* (see above p. 89), which belongs to Demeter.

[3] *Ibid.*

Artemis, Καλλίστη, 'most beautiful'[1]. The same deity, I suspect, survived also until recently, under a disguised form but with a kindred name, in Athens: for the folk there used to tell of one whom they named 'Saint Beautiful' (ἡ ἁγία Καλή), but to whom no church was ever dedicated[2]; her canonisation was only popular.

The account which I received in Aetolia of this 'lady Beautiful' agreed closely with the description already given of 'the queen of the mountains.' In appearance and in character she is but a Nereid on a larger scale. All the beauty and the frowardness so freely imputed to the nymphs are superlatively hers; there is no safety from her; on hillside, in coppice, by rivulet, everywhere she may be encountered; the tongue that makes utterance in her presence is thenceforth tied, and the eyes that behold her are darkened. The punishment that befell Teiresias of old for looking upon Athena as she bathed still awaits those who stray by mischance beside some sequestered pool or stream where the Nereids and their queen are wont to bathe in the heat of noon.

Such a spot, favoured in olden time by Artemis and her attendant Naiads, was the Cretan river Amnisos[3]; and it was probably no mere coincidence, but a good instance rather of the continuity of local tradition, that in comparatively recent times her personality and perhaps even her old name were still known in the district. It is recorded that in the sixteenth century both priests and people of the district declared that at a pretty little tarn near the Gulf of Mirabella they had seen 'Diana and her fair nymphs' lay aside their white raiment and bathe and disappear in the clear waters[4]. It would have been highly interesting to know the name of the goddess which the Italian writer translated as 'Diana.' Though it is true that in Italy[5] Diana herself was still worshipped in magical nightly orgies as late as the fourteenth century, it is scarcely likely that the Italian name had been adopted in Crete. More probably the slovenly fashion of

[1] Cf. Paus. VIII. 35. 8, whence it appears probable that the nymph Καλλιστώ was once identical with Artemis; see Preller, *Griech. Mythol.* p. 304.

[2] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. I. p. 227.

[3] Apoll. Rhod. III. 877. Callim. *Hymn to Artemis*, 15.

[4] From Onorio Belli, *Descrizione dell' isola di Candia*, in Museum of Classical Antiqu., vol. II. p. 271. Cf. B. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 108. Spratt, *Trav. in Crete*, I. p. 146.

[5] Du Cange, *Gloss. med. et infim. Latin.* s.v. *Diana.*

miscalling Greek deities by Latin names was as common then as now; and in this instance a piece of valuable evidence has thereby been irretrievably lost. Yet the traditional connexion of Artemis with this district of Crete warrants the assumption that the leader of the nymphs of whom the story tells was in personality, if not also in name, the ancient Greek goddess, and no Italian importation.

Distinct reference to the bathing of Artemis is also made in a story which has already been related in connexion with Aphrodite and Eros[1]. A prince, who had journeyed to the garden of Eros to fetch water for the healing of his father's blindness, saw in the spring there 'a woman white as snow and shining as the moon. And it was in very truth the moon that bathed here.' The last sentence, provided always that it be free from modern scholastic contamination, is an unique example of the survival of Artemis in the *rôle* of the moon; while the healing properties of the spring in which she bathes offer a coincidence, certainly undesigned, with the powers of the goddess whom her worshippers of yore besought to 'banish unto the mountain-tops sickness and suffering'[2].

Whether 'the lady Beautiful' is known now also in her ancient huntress-guise, is a point not readily determined. In Aetolia certainly I once or twice heard mention of her hunting on the mountains, but without feeling sure whether the word 'hunt' was being used literally or in metaphor. Expressions borrowed from the chase are not uncommon in the language, and the particular verb *κυνηγῶ*, 'I hunt,' is in the vernacular used of anything from rabbit-shooting to wife-beating. The injuries inflicted by Artemis on those who trespass upon her haunts might possibly be denoted by the same term. On the other hand it is not in the character of 'the lady Beautiful,' as it is in that of the 'hunter' Charos, to seek men out and slay them; men may fall chance victims to the sudden anger of the goddess, but they are the chosen quarry of the other's prowess; he is a true 'hunter' of men, and, try as they will to evade him, he still pursues; but Artemis strikes none who turn aside from her path. I incline therefore to believe that the word 'to hunt' was intended literally when I heard it used of 'the lady Beautiful,' and that the ancient Artemis' love of the chase is not forgotten by the Aetolian peasantry.

[1] Above, p. 119.

[2] *Orph. Hymn* 36 (35) *ad fin.*

Such are the reminiscences of Artemis which I have been able to gather in a few districts of modern Greece. But it is clear that down to the seventeenth century the goddess was much more widely known. Leo Allatius[1], writing about the year 1630, after giving a good description of the Nereids, plunges abruptly into a long quotation from Michael Psellus, from which and from Allatius' own comments on it some information about the Queen of the Nereids may be gleaned. The passage in question runs as follows, the comments and explanations in brackets being my own:—

'ἡ καλὴ τὸν ὡραῖον. Supply ἀπέτεκεν. (Apparently a proverb, 'Fair mother, fine son,' to the usage of which Psellus gives some religious colour.) For the Virgin that brought forth was wonderfully fair, dazzling in the brightness of her graces, and her son was exceeding beautiful, fair beyond the sons of men. (Notwithstanding however the religious significance of the proverb, he at once condemns the use of it.) As a matter of fact, the phrase is due to faulty speech. For the popular language has perverted the saying. It is right to say καλὴν τῶν ὀρέων ('fair lady of the mountains'); but the people have made the saying καλὴ τὸν ὡραῖον ('fair mother, fine son'). (There is no distinction in sound, according to the modern pronunciation, between τῶν ὀρέων and τὸν ὡραῖον.) Hence we see that the popular imagination had once fashioned, quite unreasonably, a female deity whose domain was the mountains and who as it were disported herself upon them..... There is no deity called 'fair lady of the mountains,' nor is the so-called Barychnas a deity at all but a trouble arising in the head from heartburn or ill-digested food,...which is also known as Ephialtes.'

Here Psellus is rambling in his dissertation as wildly as though his own head were affected by this demoniacal ailment. Which Allatius observing comments thus:—

'What has Barychnas or Babutzicarius[2] or if you like Ephialtes to do with the fair lady of the woods or the mountains (*pulcram nemorum sive montium*)? From them men suffer lying abed; whereas attacks such as we have said are made by Callicantzarus[3],

[1] *De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. xx.
[2] For these two names see above, p. 21.
[3] For the *Callicantzari* see below, p. 190.

Burcolacas[1], or Nereid, occur in the open country and public roadways.... And Psellus himself knew quite well that the 'fair lady of the mountains' was nothing other than those who are commonly called the 'fair mistresses'[2] (i.e. Nereids), who have nothing on earth to do with Barychnas and Ephialtes.'

The argument of this strangely confused passage is happily beside our mark, and we need not puzzle, with Psellus, over the demonology of dyspepsia. His interpretation of the phrase καλὴ τῶν ὀρέων I have even ventured to omit, for a devious path of wilful reasoning leads only to the conclusion that it means the tree on which Christ was crucified. The only method in his mad medley of medicine and theology is the intention to refute the popular belief in a beautiful goddess who haunted the mountains.

Some details of the belief may be gathered from Allatius' criticism of the argument. Psellus mentions only the title ἡ καλὴ τῶν ὀρέων, but Allatius amplifies it in the phrase *pulcram nemorum sive montium*, implying thereby that in his own time Artemis—for it can be none other—was associated as much with woodland as with mountain; while her intimate connexion with the Nereids is adduced as a matter of common knowledge. The somewhat loose phrase by which Allatius indicates this fact—*pulcram montium nihil aliud esse quam eas quas vulgus vocat pulcras dominas*—must not be read in any strict and narrow sense. The beautiful lady of the mountains is, he means, just such as are the Nereids; but she is a definite person, distinguished as of old among her comrades by supreme grace and loveliness.

The statements of Leo Allatius, based as they are in the main upon his own recollections of his native Chios, find remarkable corroboration in a history of the same island written a little earlier by one Jerosme Justinian[3]. In the main the history is purely

[1] For *Burcolakes* or *Vrykolakes* see below, cap. IV.

[2] *pulcras dominas*, a translation of the Nereids' title καλὰς ἀρχόντισσας, *ibid.* cap. XIX.

[3] The title-page of this exceedingly rare work runs as follows:—

La description et histoire de l'isle de Scios ou Chios
par
Jerosme Justinian
Gentil'homme ordinaire de la chambre du Roy Tres-Chrestien, fils de Seigneur Vincent Justinian, l'un des Seigneurs de la dite Isle, Chevalier de l'ordre de sa Majesté, Conseiller en son Conseil d'Estat et Privé, et Ambassadeur extraordinaire du Roy, auprez de Sultan Selin, Grand Seigneur de Constantinople.
M.D.VI.

In the copy formerly belonging to the historian Finlay and now in the possession

fabulous, taking its start from a point, if my memory serves me rightly, many centuries earlier than the Deluge; but the reference to contemporary superstitions may I think be trusted.

Previously to the passage which I translate, the writer has been telling the tale of the building of a wonderful tower by king Scelerion of Chios, wherein to guard his daughter Omorfia (Beauty) and three maids of honour with her until such time as he should find a husband worthy of her; how the workmen never left the tower till it was finished; how the master-mason threw down his implements from the top and himself essayed to fly down on wings of his own contrivance, which however failed to work as he had hoped, with the result that he fell into the river below the castle and was drowned; and how his ghost was seen there every first of May at midday. This story, which may be taken as a fair type of the whole 'history,' leads, by its mentions of apparitions on May 1st, to the following passage[1]:—

'They have also another foolish belief, that near the tower are to be seen three youthful women, clothed in white, who invite passers-by to throw themselves into the river and get some cups of gold and silver which by diabolical illusion are seen floating on the water, in the hope that going into the river they may be drowned in a whirlpool called by the Greeks Chiroclacas, the water of which penetrates beneath the mountain as far as the precipice where the princess still shows herself. Further, there is no manner of doubt that the three ladies who appear to the inhabitants of the place are those spirits who make their dwelling in the water, assuming the form of women, and called by the ancients *Nereides* or *Negiardes*; the good women are so abused by these illusions that on the first of May they are wont to make crosses on their doors, saying that the goddess of their mountains is due to come and visit them in their houses, and that without this mark she would not come in; likewise they say that she would slay any one who should go to meet her. And so they give her the

of the British School of Archaeology at Athens is found a note by Finlay as follows:—'Joh. Wilh. Zinkeisen in Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches in Europa (Gotha, 1854), vol. ii. p. 90, note 2, mentions a second printed copy as existing in the Mazarine Library at Paris, and a manuscript copy in possession of Justiniani family at Genoa. The date according to Zinkeisen should be not MDVI but MDCVI.' There is no designation of the press or place from which the volume issued.

[1] *op. cit.* bk vi. p. 59.

name of 'good,' being obliged by the fear in which they hold her to give her this title of honour. Some people are of opinion that this goddess is one of the Oread nymphs who dwell in the mountains . . . .'

This 'goddess of the mountains' whom they call 'good' (i.e. probably *καλή*) is beyond doubt the same who was known to Psellus and to Allatius as *ἡ καλὴ τῶν ὀρέων*, 'the beautiful lady of the mountains,' and to my pastoral informant as *ἡ βασίλισσα τῶν βουνῶν*, 'the queen of the mountains'; and in general the conception of her is the same as continues locally to the present day. One statement indeed I cannot explain, namely that the women make crosses on their doors with the purpose of attracting the goddess to their houses; for I have already mentioned the same use of the symbol for the contrary purpose of keeping the Nereids out[1]. Possibly as regards this detail of the 'foolish belief' the *grand seigneur* was wrongly informed. But in other respects, in the close association of the goddess with the Oreads or other nymphs, in the fear which she inspired, in the belief that she slew those who ventured upon her path, the Chian record is in complete agreement with the description which I have given from oral sources. In terror, as in charm, the Nereids' queen is foremost.

A contrary view however is taken by Bernard Schmidt[2], who states that she is pictured by the commonfolk as gentler and friendlier to man than her companions, and even disposed to check their light and froward ways. On such a point, I freely admit, local tradition might well vary; but in this particular case I am inclined to think that Schmidt fell into the error of confusing the wild-roaming, nymph-escorted goddess of hill and vale and fountain with that other goddess who dwells solitary in the heart of the mountain, dispensing blessings to the good and pains to the wicked, and in the conception of whom we found an aftermath of the ancient crop of legends concerning Demeter and Kore. Surely this grand and lonely figure, 'the Mistress of the Earth and of the Sea,' is in every trait different from the lovely, capricious, cruel 'Queen of the Mountains.' Indeed the very circumstance of both presentations being known in one and the same district

[1] See above, p. 140.
[2] *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, pp. 107 and 123.

—as, to my own knowledge, in Aetolia, and, on Schmidt's own showing, in Zacynthos[1]—proves that two divine persons, in type and in character essentially different, are here involved, and not merely two accidental and local differentiations of the same deity. Doubtless in the more 'civilised' parts of Greece (to use the word beloved of the half-educated town-bred Greek), in the parts where old beliefs and customs are falling into decay and contempt while nothing good is substituted for them, even the lower classes have lost or are losing count and memory of many of those powers whom their forefathers acknowledged; but in the more favourably sequestered villages, let us say, of Aetolia, where superstition still fears no mockery, no peasant would commit the mistake of confounding his Demeter with his Artemis. Between majestic loneliness and frolicsome throng, between dignified beauty and bewitching loveliness, between gentleness and lightness, between love of good and wanton merriment, between justice and caprice, the gulf is wide.

But while the modern Artemis is the leader of her nymphs in mischief and even in cruelty, it must not be thought that she is always a foe to man. In Aetolia 'the lady Beautiful' is quick to avenge a slight or an intrusion; but for those who pay her due reverence she is a ready helper and a giver of good gifts. Health and wealth lie in her hand, to bestow or to withhold, as in the hands of the Nereids. Hence even he whom her sudden anger has once smitten may regain her favour by offerings of honey and other sweetmeats on the scene of his calamity. And probably peace-offerings with less definite intent have been or still are in vogue; for it is reported that presents used to be brought to the cross-roads in Zacynthos at midday or midnight simply to appease 'the great lady' and her train[2], a survival surely of the ancient banquets of Hecate surnamed Τριοδῖτις, 'Goddess of the Cross-roads.'

In some cases hesitation may be felt in pronouncing an opinion whether it is for Artemis and the nymphs or for the Fates[3] (Μοῖραι) that these gifts are intended; and in the category of the doubtful must be included all those cases where the dedi-

[1] Compare *Märchen*, etc. Song 56 and Stories 7, 19, with *Das Volksleben*, p. 123.
[2] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 129.
[3] See above, p. 121.

cation of the offerings is merely to the καλαὶς κυρᾶδες[1], 'good ladies,' no further information being vouchsafed. Several writers, including the German Ross and the Greek Pittakis, appear to have assumed without sufficient enquiry that none but the Nereids could be thus designated; but as a matter of fact, the same euphemistic title is occasionally given also to the Fates[2]; and while I incline to trust the experience and judgement of Ross in the general statement which he makes concerning such offerings at Athens, Thebes, and elsewhere[3], the accuracy of Pittakis[4] on the other hand is challenged by the actual spot which he is describing when he identifies the 'good ladies' with the Nereids; for the place was none other than the so-called 'prison of Socrates,' which the testimony of many travellers concurs in assigning to the Fates.

But, though some of the evidence concerning offerings demands closer scrutiny before it can have any bearing upon the continued belief in the existence of Artemis, there are certainly some corners of Greece in which that goddess is still worshipped. 'The great lady,' 'the Queen of the mountains,' 'the lady Beautiful' are the various titles of a single goddess whose beauty and quick anger have ever since the heroic age held the Greek folk in awe and demanded their reverence; and until the inroads of European civilisation destroy with the weapon of ridicule all that is old in custom and creed, Artemis will continue to hold some sway over hill and stream and woodland.

The other queen, of whom my boatman spoke, 'the Queen of the Shore,' she who stands in the shallows and by her beauty and sweet voice entices the unwary to share her bed in the depths of the sea, must I think be identified with a being who is more commonly called 'the Lamia of the Sea' or 'the Lamia of the Shore.' A popular poem[5] from Salonica, in which these two titles are found side by side, tells of a contest between her and a young shepherd. One day, in disregard of his mother's warning, he was playing his pipes upon the shore, when the Lamia appeared to

[1] Also in one word καλλικυρᾶδες or καλοκυρᾶδες.

[2] Cf. Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. p. 227; Pouqueville, *Voyage en Grèce*, VI. p. 160; and above, p. 125.

[3] *Reisen auf dem griech. Inseln*, III. pp. 45 and 182.

[4] In Ἐφημ. Ἀρχαιολογική, 1852, p. 648.

[5] Passow, *Pop. Carm. Graec. Recent.* no. 524.

him and made a wager with him that she would dance longer than he would go on playing. If he should win, he should have her to wife; if she should win, she was to take all his flocks as the prize. Three days the shepherd played, three whole nights and days; then his strength failed him, and the Lamia took his sheep and goats and left him destitute.

This poem has some points in common with a belief said to be held in the district of Parnassos, that if a young man—especially one who is handsome—play the flute or sing at mid-day or midnight upon the shore, the Lamia thereof emerges from the depths of the sea, and with promises of a happy life tries to persuade him to be her husband and to come with her into the sea; if the young man refuse, she slays him[1]: and presumably, though this is not mentioned, if he consent, she drowns him.

The same Lamia, it is recorded[2], is also known on the coasts of Elis as a dangerous foe to sailors; for her work is the waterspout and the whirlwind, whereby their ships are engulfed. Among the Cyclades too the same belief certainly prevails (though I have never obtained there any details concerning the character of the Lamia); for on seeing a waterspout the sailors will exclaim, 'the Lamia of the Sea is passing' (*περνάει ἡ Λάμια τοῦ πελάγου*), and sometimes stick a black-handled knife into the mast as a charm against her[3].

In these somewhat meagre accounts of the Lamia of the Sea, there are several points in harmony with the general conception of Nereids. She is beautiful; she seeks the love of young men, even though that love mean death to them; she is sweet of voice and untiring in dance; and she passes to and fro in waterspout or whirlwind. It is not surprising then to find that in Elis she is actually named queen of the Nereids[4], that is, without doubt, of the sea-nymphs only, since she herself has her domain only in the sea. And the title 'queen of the shore' which I learnt of my boatman from Scyros points to the same belief; for as we found Artemis, 'queen of the mountains,' to be the leader of all the

[1] Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 130.

[2] Curt. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im Neuen*, p. 31. Cf. also *Παρνασσός*, IV. p. 773 (1880).

[3] Cf. Theodore Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 144, who mentions also the custom of shooting at the waterspout as a precaution.

[4] Curt. Wachsmuth, *op. cit.* p. 30.

Nereids of the land, so should 'the queen of the shore' be ruler over the Nereids of the sea.

How far this conception of the Lamia of the Sea accords with classical tradition, it is impossible to decide. Only in one passage, a fragment of Stesichorus[1], is there any evidence of the connexion of a Lamia with the sea. There the marine monster, Scylla, was made 'the daughter of Lamia,' a phrase which has given rise to the conjecture that the ancients like the moderns, as we shall see in the next section, recognised more than one species. A marine Lamia would supply the most natural parentage for Scylla; and if her mother may be identified with the modern Lamia of the Sea, the foe of ships and creator of the waterspout, the character of Scylla is true to her lineage.

But the other traits in the character of the modern Lamia of the Sea can hardly be hers by such ancient prescription. It is difficult to suppose that Stesichorus pictured Scylla's mother as a thing of beauty; and the charm of the modern Lamia's love-songs which seduce men to their death is perhaps an attribute borrowed from the Sirens. It is therefore in virtue of acquired rather than original qualities that the Lamia of the Sea has come to be queen of the sea-nymphs.

## § 11. Lamiae, Gelloudes, and Striges.

The three classes of female monsters, of whom the present section treats, have ever since the early middle ages[2] been constantly confounded, and the special attributes of each assigned promiscuously to the others. This is due to the fact that all three possess one pronounced quality in common, the propensity towards preying upon young children; and wherever this horrible trait has absorbed, as it well may, the whole attention of mediaeval writer or modern peasant, the distinctions between them in origin and nature have become obscured. Yet sufficient information is forthcoming, if used with discrimination, to enable some account to be given of each class separately.

[1] Schol. ad Apoll. Rhod. IV. 828, cited by Wachsmuth, *loc. cit.*

[2] For passages from authors of the 11th century and onwards see Leo Allatius, *De quor. Graec. opin.* cap. iii., and Grimm, *Deutsche Mythologie*, II. 1012.

The Lamiae are hideous monsters, shaped as gigantic and coarse-looking women for the most part, but with strange deformities of the lower limbs such as Aristophanes attributed to a kindred being, the Empusa[1]. Their feet are dissimilar and may be more than two in number; one is often of bronze, while others resemble those of animals—ox, ass, or goat[2]. Tradition relates that one of these monsters was once shot by a peasant at Koropíon, a village in Attica, and was found to measure three fathoms in length; and her loathsome nature was attested by the fact that, when her body was thrown out in a desert plain, no grass would grow where her blood had dripped[3]. The chief characteristics of the Lamiae, apart from their thirst for blood, are their uncleanliness, their gluttony, and their stupidity. The details of the first need not be named, but would still furnish a jest for Aristophanes in his coarser mood as they did of old[4]. Their gluttony is clearly proved by their unwieldy corpulence. Their stupidity is best shown in their sorry management of their homes; for even the Lamiae have their domestic duties, being mated usually, according to the folk-tales[5], with dragons (*δράκοι*), and making their abode in caverns and desert places. They ply the broom so poorly that 'the Lamia's sweeping' (*τῆς Λάμιας τὰ σαρώματα*) has become a proverb for untidiness[6]; they are so ignorant of bread-making that they put their dough into a cold oven and heap the fire on top of it[7]; they give their dogs hay to eat, and bones to their horses[8]. But they have at least the redeeming virtue of sometimes showing gratitude to those who help them out of the ill plight to which their ignorance has brought them[9].

Their stupidity also is regarded by the Greeks as a cause of honesty. Though they are often rich, as being the consorts of dragons whose chief function it is to keep guard over hidden treasure, they have not the wit to keep their wealth, but foolishly keep their word instead. Athenian tradition tells of a very rich Lamia (known by the name of *ἡ Μόρα*, perhaps better written *Μώρα*, a proper name formed from *μωρός*, 'foolish'), who used to

[1] Aristophanes, *Frogs*, 293.
[2] Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 133.
[3] *Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην.* I. p. 224.
[4] *Vespae*, 1177, and *Pax*, 758.
[5] e.g. Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, no. 4.
[6] *Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ.* p. 193.
[7] Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, no. 4. Cf. *Πολίτης, l.c.*
[8] *Πολίτης, l.c.*
[9] e.g. Hahn, *Griech. Märchen*, nos. 4 and 32.

walk about at night, seizing and crushing men whom she met till they roared like bulls. But if her victim kept his wits about him and snatched her head-dress from her, she would, in order to get it back, promise him both life and wealth, and keep her word[1].

Such aspects of the Lamiae however are by no means universally acknowledged; nine peasants out of ten, I suspect, could give no further information about their character than that they feed on human flesh and choose above all new-born infants as their prey. Hence comes the popular phrase (employed, it would appear, in more than one district of Greece) in reference to children who have died suddenly, *τὸ παιδὶ τὸ ἔπνιξε ἡ Λάμια*[2], 'the child has been strangled by the Lamia.'

But in general I think the ravages of Lamiae have ceased to inspire much genuine fear in the peasants' minds. One there was, so I heard, near Kephalóvryso in Aetolia, whose dwelling-place, a cave beside a torrent-bed, was to some extent dreaded and avoided. But in most parts the Lamia only justifies the memory of her existence by serving to provide adventures for the heroes of folk-stories; by lending her name, along with Empusa and Mormo (who still locally survive[3]), as a terror with which mothers may intimidate naughty children, or by furnishing it as a ready weapon of vituperation in the wordy warfare of women.

The word Lamia, which has survived unchanged in form down to the present day save that the by-forms *Λάμνα*, *Λάμνια*, and *Λάμνισσα* are locally preferred, did not originally it would seem indicate a species of monster but a single person. Lamia according to classical tradition was the name of a queen of Libya who was loved by Zeus, and thus excited the resentment of Hera, who robbed her of all her children; whereupon the desolate queen took up her abode in a grim and lonely cavern, and there changed into a malicious and greedy monster, who in envy and despair stole and killed the children of more fortunate mothers[4].

But a plural of the word, indicating that the single monster had been multiplied into a whole class, soon occurs. Philostratus[5]

[1] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην.* III. p. 156.

[2] *Ἐφημ. Ἀρχαιολογική*, 1852, p. 653, and *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρ.* II. p. 135.

[3] A few instances are collected by Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 141.

[4] See Preller, *Griech. Myth.* p. 618.

[5] *Τὰ ἐς τὸν Τυανέα Ἀπολλώνιον*, IV. 25 (p. 76).

in speaking of 'the Empusae, which the common people call Lamiae and Mormolykiae,' says, 'Now these desire indeed the pleasures of love, but yet more do they desire human flesh, and use the pleasures of love to decoy those on whom they will feast.' A plural such as is here used might of course be merely a studied expression of contempt for vulgar superstitions; but the latter part of the quotation seems to give a fair summary of the character of ancient Lamiae. This is illustrated by a gruesome story, narrated by Apuleius[1], of two Lamiae who, in vengeance for a slight of the love proffered by one of them to a young man named Socrates, tore out his heart one night before the eyes of his companion Aristomenes.

Of these two main characteristics of the ancient Lamiae, the one, lasciviousness, has come to be mainly imputed in modern times to the Lamia of the Sea, the single deity who rules the sea-nymphs; while the craving for human flesh is the most marked feature of the terrestrial tribe of Lamiae. But the latter certainly are the truest descendants of the ancient Lamia, and occupy a place in popular belief such as she held of old; for few, it would seem, stood then in any serious fear of the Lamia; the testimony of several ancient writers[2] (the story of Apuleius notwithstanding) proves that more than two thousand years ago she had already fallen to the level of bogeys which frighten none but children.

### Gelloudes.

In my account of the Nereids properly so-called, reference was made to certain beings known in the Cyclades as ἀγιελοῦδες or γιαλοῦδες and reckoned by several writers[3] among the nymphs of the sea. In this they certainly have the support of popular etymology; for in Amorgos Theodore Bent[4] heard that 'an evil spirit lived close by, which now and again rises out of the sea and seizes infants; hence it is called Gialoù (from γιαλός[5], the sea (*sic*)).' But it is, I think, only an erroneous association by the inhabitants of the Cyclades of two like-sounding words which has caused the Ἀγιελοῦδες to be regarded as marine demons; Bent's

[1] *Metamorph.* I. cap. 11—19.
[2] Lucian, *Philopseudes*, § 2. Strabo, I. p. 19. Schol. ad Arist. *Vesp.* 1177.
[3] See above, pp. 147–8.
[4] *The Cyclades*, p. 496.
[5] γιαλός = ancient αἰγιαλός, 'the shore.'

information transposes cause and effect. Elsewhere in Greece there are known certain beings called Γελλοῦδες or Γιλλοῦδες, female demons with a propensity to carry off young children and to devour them; and it is strange that so careful an authority on Greek folk-lore as Bernhard Schmidt should not have recognised that the name ἀγιελοῦδες employed in some of the Cyclades is only a dialectic form of the commoner γελλοῦδες[1] with an euphonetic ἀ prefixed as in the case of νεράϊδες and ἀνεράϊδες. Enquiry in Tenos revealed to me the fact, not mentioned, though perhaps implied, in the statement of Bent, that the ἀγιελοῦδες are there believed to feed upon the children whom they carry off. This trait at once confirms their identity with the γελλοῦδες, and renders it impossible to class them as a form of nymph. It is of course believed that nymphs of the sea or of rivers, when they carry off human children to their watery habitations, do incidentally drown them, but by an oversight and not of malice prepense. But savagely to prey upon human flesh—for all the nymphs' wantonness and cruelty, that is a thing abhorrent from their nature and inconceivable in them. This horrid propensity proves the γελλοῦδες or ἀγιελοῦδες to be a separate class of female demons.

The chief authority on these malignant beings is Leo Allatius[2], who both quotes a series of passages which enable us to trace the development of the belief in them, and also tells a story which is the only source of evidence concerning other of their characteristics than their appetite for the flesh of infants.

Their prototype, mentioned, we are told, by Sappho, was the maiden Gello, whose spectre after her untimely end was said by the people of Lesbos to beset children and to be chargeable with the early deaths of infants[3].

The individuality of this Gello continued to be recognised to some extent as late as the tenth century[4]; for Ignatius, a deacon of Constantinople, in his life of the Patriarch Tarasius named her as a single demon, though he added that the crime of killing

[1] The differences in sound between γι and γ before ε, and between λ and λλ, are negligible. In many words and dialects there are none.

[2] *De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. iii.—viii.

[3] Zenob. *Cent.* III. 3. Suidas s.v. Γελλοῦς *παιδοφιλωτέρα* (a proverb). Hesych. s.v. Γελλώ.

[4] The date is approximate only; for the authorship of the work in question is, I understand, disputed.

children in the same way was also imputed to a whole class of witches. 'Hence,' comments Allatius, 'it has come about that at the present day Striges (i.e. the witches of whom Ignatius speaks), because they practise evil arts upon infants and by sucking their blood or in other ways cause their death, are called Gellones[1].' In the story also which exhibits the chief qualities of this demon, her name (in the form Γυλοῦ) appears still as a proper name.

But the multiplication of the single demon into a whole class dates from long before the time of Allatius. John of Damascus in the eighth century used the plural γελοῦδες as a popular word, the meaning of which he took to be the same as that of Striges (στρίγγαι); and Michael Psellus too in the eleventh century evidently regarded these two words as interchangeable designations of a class of beings (whether of demons or of witches, he leaves uncertain); for after an exact account of the Striges and their thirst for children's blood, he says that new-born infants who waste away (as if from the draining of their blood by these Striges) are called Γιλλόβρωτα[2], 'Gello-eaten.'

The story of Leo Allatius[3], which sets forth the chief qualities of Gello, is a legend of which the Saints Sisynios and Synidoros are the heroes. The children of their sister Melitene had been devoured by this demon, and they set themselves to capture her. She, to effect her escape, at once changed her shape, and became first a swallow and then a fish; but, for all her slippery and elusive transformations, they finally caught her in the form of a goat's hair adhering to the king's beard. Then addressing to her the words 'Cease, foul Gello, from slaying the babes of Christians,' they worked upon her fears until they extorted from her a confession of her twelve and a half names, the knowledge of which was a safeguard against her assaults.

It is this list of names in which the various aspects of her activity appear. The first is Γυλοῦ, one of the forms of the name Gello; the second Μωρά[4], the name of a kind of Lamia;

[1] This is merely a Latinised plural form; the Greek plural regularly ends in -δες.

[2] This word is recorded as still in use by Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im Neuen*, p. 78.

[3] *op. cit.* cap. viii.

[4] Cf. above, p. 174, where however the accent is given as belonging to the first syllable. The actual spelling in Allatius is Μωρρᾶ. The word in form Μορῆ also occurs in conjunction with the mention of Striges and Geloudes in a MS. of νομοκανόνες obtained by Dr W. H. D. Rouse. See *Folklore*, vol. x. no. 2, p. 151.

the third Βυζοῦ or 'blood-sucker'; the fourth Μαρμαροῦ, probably 'stony-hearted'; the fifth Πετασία, for she can fly as a bird in the air; the sixth Πελαγία, for she can swim as a fish in the sea; the seventh Βορδόνα[1], probably meaning 'stooping like a kite on her prey'; the eighth Ἀπλετοῦ, 'insatiable'; the ninth Χαμοδράκαινα, for she can lurk like a snake in the earth; the tenth Ἀναβαρδαλαία[2], possibly 'soaring like a lark in the air'; the eleventh Ψυχανασπάστρια[3], 'snatcher of souls'; the twelfth Παιδοπνίκτρια, 'strangler of children'; and the half-name Στρίγλα, the kind of witch whereof the next section treats.

Whether these names are anywhere still remembered as a mystic incantation, or all the qualities which they imply still imputed to the Gelloudes, I cannot say. But a modern cure for such of the demon's injuries as are not immediately fatal has been recorded from Amorgos. 'If a child has been afflicted by it, the mother first sends for the priest to curse the demon, and scratches her child with her nails; if these plans do not succeed, she has to go down at sunset to the shore, and select forty round stones brought up by forty different waves; these she must take home and boil in vinegar, and when the cock crows the evil phantom will disappear and leave the child whole[4].'

## Striges.

The Striges, though often confused with Lamiae and with Gelloudes, are essentially different from them. The two classes with which I have dealt are demons; the Striges, in the modern acceptation of the term, are women who possess the power to transform themselves into birds of prey or other animals; and it is only the taste for blood, shared by them with those demons, which has created the confusion.

The Striges moreover cannot, like the Lamiae or Gelloudes, be claimed either as an original product of the Greek imagination or as the exclusive property of Greek superstition at the present

[1] Probably from Low Latin '*burdo*'=*milvus*, a kite.

[2] Compounded from Low Latin '*bardala*'=*alauda*, a lark. A form ἀναβαρδοῦ occurs in a similar list of names cited by Dr Rouse from a MS. on magic. See *Folklore*, *l.c.* p. 162. The names said to have been extorted by the Archangel Michael begin there with στρίγλα, γιλοῦ, and belong clearly to a similar female demon.

[3] The spelling in the text of Allatius before me is ψυχρανωσπάστρια.

[4] Theo. Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 496.

day. The Albanians have a word στρῑ́γ̲ε̲α, and the people of Corsica a term *strega*, both of which denote a witch of the same powers and propensities as are feared in Greece; and it is likely that all of them—Greeks, Albanians, Corsicans—have borrowed the conception from Italy. The ancient Greeks indeed had a word στρίγξ identical with the *strix* of Latin, but the shrieking night-bird denoted by it was not, so far as I can discover, invested by Greek imagination with any terrors. In Italy on the contrary the Strix was widely feared as a bloodthirsty monster in bird-form. Pliny evidently supposed it to be some actual bird, though he doubted the fables concerning it. 'The *strix*,' he says, 'certainly is mentioned in ancient curses; but what kind of bird it may be, is not I think agreed[1].' Perhaps in those 'ancient curses' it was invoked to inflict such punishment upon enemies as it once meted out to Otos and Ephialtes for their attempt upon Diana's chastity[2].

The notion however that Striges were not really birds but witches in bird-form early suggested itself and found an exponent in Ovid[3]. 'Voracious birds,' he says, 'there are...that fly forth by night and assail children who still need a nurse's care, and seize them out of their cradles and do them mischief. With their beaks they are said to pick out the child's milk-fed bowels, and their throat is full of the blood they drink. Striges they are called...and whether they come into being as birds or are changed thereto by incantation, and the Marsian spell transforms old women into winged things,'—such are their ways.

This was probably the state of the superstition when the Greeks added Striges to their own list of nightly terrors; and the very form of the word in modern Greek, στρίγλα or στρίγγλα (being apparently a diminutive, *strigula*, such as spoken Latin would readily have formed from the literary form *strix*), testifies to the borrowing of the belief.

In Greece the latter of the two ways in which Ovid explained the origin of the Strix seems to have been generally accepted as correct. It is true that the modern Greeks still have a real bird called στριγλοποῦλι[4] (either some kind of owl or the night-jar), which not only loves twilight or darkness in the upper world

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* XI. 39.
[2] Hyginus, *Fabul.* 28, emend. Barth.
[3] *Fasti*, VI. 131 ff.
[4] The same apparently as the στρίγλος of Hesychius. The Greek peasants are very vague about the names of any birds other than those which they eat.

but is also said to haunt the gloomy demesnes of Charos below—thereby revealing perhaps some slight evidence of its relationship to the *strix* which tormented the brother giants; but the Strigla has long ceased to be a real bird, and (apart from the confusion with a Lamia or Gello) is always a witch.

The condition of the belief in the eighth century is noticed by John of Damascus[1]. 'There are some of the more ignorant who say that there are women known as Striges (Στρῦγγαι), otherwise called Geloudes. They allege that these are to be seen at night passing through the air, and that when they happen to come to a house they find no obstacle in doors and bolts, but though the doors are securely locked make their way in and throttle infants. Others say that the Strix devours the liver and all the internal organs of the children, and so sets a short limit to their lives. And they stoutly declare, some that they have seen, and others that they have heard, the Strix entering houses, though the doors were locked, either in bodily form or as a spirit only.'

Again in the eleventh century Michael Psellus noticed the same superstition, though as we have seen his language suggests some confusion of Striges with Gelloudes. But he is really describing the faculty of the former to assume the shape of birds when he says, 'The superstition obtaining nowadays invests old women with this power. It provides them with wings in their extreme age, and represents them as settling[2] unseen upon infants, whom, it is alleged, they suck until they exhaust all the humours in them'[3].

Leo Allatius, by whom this passage is cited, produces both from his own experience and from the testimony of others several instances of such occurrences, and mentions also the various precautions taken against them. These include all-night watches, lamps suspended before the pictures of patron-saints, amulets of garlic or of coral, and the smearing of oil from some saint's lamp on the face of the child or invalid. It will suffice however to quote his general description of the Striges according to the beliefs of the seventeenth century. Striges (στρίγλαις), he tells

[1] I. p. 473 (περὶ Στρυγγῶν), Migne, *Patrol. Graeco-Lat.* vol. xciv., p. 1604.
[2] The word is εἰσοικίζει which suggests rather the 'possession' of children by Striges as by devils. This however could hardly represent fairly the popular belief.
[3] Quoted by Leo Allatius, *op. cit.* cap. iii.

us in effect, are old women whom poverty and misery drive to contract an alliance with the devil for all evil purposes; men are little molested by them, but women and still more commonly children, being a weaker and easier prey, suffer much from them, their breath alone[1] being so pernicious as to cause insanity or even death. They are especially addicted to attacking new-born babes, sucking out their blood and leaving them dead, or so polluting them by their touch that what life remains to them is never free from sickness.

It will have been noticed in this last account of the Striges, that the range of their activity is somewhat enlarged, so that women as well as children fall victims to them. At the present day, though they are believed to prey chiefly upon infants, even grown men are not immune, as witness a story[2] from Messenia.

Once upon a time a man was passing the night at the house of a friend whose household consisted of his wife and mother-in-law. About midnight some noise awakened him, and listening intently he made out the voices of the two women conversing together. What he heard terrified him, for they were planning to eat himself or his host, whichever proved the fatter. At once he perceived that his friend's wife and mother-in-law were Striges, and knowing that there was no other means of escaping the danger that was threatening him, he determined to try to save himself by guile. The Striges advanced towards the sleeping men and took hold of their guest's foot to see if it was heavy, and consequently fat and good for eating; he however, understanding their purpose, raised his foot of his own accord as they took it in their hands and weighed it, so that it felt to them as light as a feather, and they let it drop again disappointed. Then they took hold of the foot of the other man who was sleeping, and naturally found it very heavy. Delighted at the result of their investigation, they ripped open the wretched man's breast, pulled out his liver and other parts, and threw them among the hot ashes on the hearth to cook. Then noticing that they had no wine, they flew to the wine-shop, took what they wanted and returned. But in the interval the guest got up, collected the flesh that was being cooked, stowed it away in his pouch, and put in its place on the hearth some

[1] So also in Albania, Hahn, *Alb. Studien*, I. 163.
[2] From Πολίτης, Μελέτη κ.τ.λ. pp. 179—181.

animal's dung. The Striges however ate up greedily what was on the hearth, complaining only that it was somewhat over-done. The next day the two friends rose and left the house; the victim of the previous night was very pale, but he did not bear the slightest wound or scar on his breast. He remarked to his companion that he felt excessively hungry, and the other gave him what had been cooked during the night, which he ate and found exceedingly invigorating; the blood mounted to his cheeks and he was perfectly sound again. Thereupon his friend told him what had happened during the night, and they went together and slew the Striges.

This story exhibits all the essential qualities of Striges. The pair of them are women, and one at least, the mother-in-law, is old; they choose the night for their depredations; they can assume the form of birds, for 'they flew,' it is said, to the wine-shop; and their taste for human flesh is the *motif* of the story.

It must however be acknowledged that as the area of the Striges' activities has become somewhat extended, so also has the ancient limitation of the term to old women become locally somewhat relaxed. In many parts of Greece a belief is held that certain infants are liable to a form of lycanthropy; and female infants so disposed are sometimes called Striges. A story from Tenos[1], narrated in several versions, concerns an infant princess who was a Strigla. Every day one of the king's horses was found to have been killed and devoured in the night. The three princes, her brothers, therefore kept watch in turn; and it fell to the fortune of the youngest of them, owing to his courage and skill, to detect the malefactor. About midnight he heard a noise, and fired into the middle of a cloud that seemed to hang over the horses, thereby so wounding his sister that the mark observed on her next day betrayed her nightly doings. Not daring however to accuse her to his father, he fled from home with his mother to a place of safety, while the girl remained undisturbed in her voracity and consumed one by one all the people of the town.

But in other places where the same belief prevails, as we shall see later, these *enfants terribles*, who may be of either sex, are called not Striges but by some such name as 'callicantzaros,'

[1] Ἀδαμάντιος Ἰ. Ἀδαμαντίου, Τηνιακά, pp. 293 sqq.

'vrykolakas,' or 'gorgon'; and this variety of names is in itself a proof that, while the idea of infant cannibals is widespread, no exact verbal equivalent now exists, and each of the several names used is only requisitioned to supply the deficiency. A child can indeed enjoy the title of Strigla by courtesy; only an old woman can possess it of right.

Thus the old Graeco-Roman fear of Striges still remains little changed. The Church has repeatedly forbidden belief in them[1]; legislation has prohibited in times past the killing of them[2]. But the link of superstition between the past and the present is still unbroken; and witch-burning is an idea which in any secluded corner of Greece might still be put into effect[3].

## § 12. Gorgons.

The modern conception of the Gorgon (*ἡ γοργόνα*) or Gorgons (*γοργόνες*)—for popular belief seems to vary locally between recognising one or more such beings—is extremely complex. Of my own knowledge I can unfortunately contribute nothing new to what has been published by others concerning them; for though I have several times heard Gorgons mentioned, and always on further enquiry found them to be terrible demons who dwell in the sea, it has so chanced that I have been unable to get any more explicit information on the subject. The present section is therefore, so far as the facts are concerned, a compilation from the researches of others, especially of Prof. Polites of Athens University.

A Gorgon is represented as half woman, half fish. Rough sketches on the walls of small taverns and elsewhere may often be observed, depicting a woman with the tail of a fish, half emerging from the waves, and holding in one hand a ship, in the other an anchor; sometimes also she is armed with a breastplate[4]. Similar designs are also to be seen tattooed upon the arms or breasts of men of the lower classes, especially among the maritime population.

[1] Du Cange, *Gloss. med. et infim. Latin.* s.vv. 'Diana' and 'Striga.'

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] A witch of Santorini told me that she had a narrow escape from being burnt for a much less heinous crime, failure to get rain. See above, p. 49.

[4] Πολίτης in Παρνασσός, II. p. 261 (1878).

The Gorgons themselves are to be encountered in all parts of the sea; but their favourite resort, especially on Saturday nights, is reputed to be the Black Sea, where if one of them meets a ship, grasping the bows with her hand she asks, 'Is king Alexander living?' To this the sailors must reply 'he lives and reigns,' and may add 'and he keeps the world at peace,' or 'and long life to you too!'; for then the awful and monstrous Gorgon in gladness at the tidings transforms herself into a beautiful maiden and calms the waves and sings melodiously to her lyre. If on the contrary the sailors make the mistake of saying that Alexander is dead, she either capsizes the ship with her own hand or by the wildness of her lamentations raises a storm from which there is no escape nor shelter[1]. The mention of Alexander the Great in these stories of the Gorgons, as also sometimes in connexion with the Nereids, is unimportant; it is not an instance of purely oral tradition, but has its source in the history of Alexander by Pseudocallisthenes[2], of which there exist paraphrases in the popular tongue. The interest of such fables lies in the association of beauty and melody as well as of horror with the Gorgons, and in the *rôle* of marine deity which they play.

In general however it is upon the monstrous and terrifying aspect of the Gorgons that the common-folk seize, so that the name Gorgon is metaphorically applied to ill-favoured and malevolent women[3]. Thus in Rhodes it is used of any large fierce-looking virago[4]; in Cephalonia (where also the word Μέδουσα, Medusa, survives in the same sense) of any lady conspicuously ill-featured[5]. Allusion too has already been made to the case where a child possessed by a mania of bloodthirstiness is occasionally called a Gorgon[6].

But there is another and fresh aspect of the Gorgon's nature suggested by the use of the word in Cythnos. There it is metaphorically applied to depraved women[7]; and this isolated usage is in accord with one description of the Gorgon which has come down from the middle ages. This description forms part of a

[1] Πολίτης, *ibid.* p. 260. [2] Πολίτης, *ibid.* pp. 266–8.
[3] Σκαρλάτος, Λεξικόν, s.v. (Πολίτης, *l.c.*).
[4] Ἐφημ. τῶν Φιλομαθῶν, 1860, p. 1272 (Πολίτης, *l.c.*).
[5] Νεοελληνικὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, II. p. 191 (Πολίτης, *l.c.*).
[6] Ἀδαμάντιος Ν. Ἀδαμαντίου, Τηνιακά, pp. 293 ff. Cf. above, p. 183. The forms used are ἡ γοργόνα, τὸ γοργόνι, and γοργονικὸ παιδί.
[7] Ἐφημ. τῶν Φιλομαθῶν, 1871, p. 1843 (Πολίτης *l.c.*).

poem entitled 'The Physiologus[1]' (written in the most debased ecclesiastical Greek and supposed to date from before the thirteenth century), which gives a fantastic account of the habits of many birds and beasts among which the Gorgon is included.

'The Gorgon is a beast like unto a harlot; the hair of her head is all auburn; the ends thereof are as it were heads of snakes; and her body is bare and smooth, white as a dove, and her bosom is a woman's with breasts fair to behold; but the look of her face brings death; whatsoever looks upon her falls down and dies. She dwells in the regions of the West. She knows all languages and the speech of wild beasts. When she desires a mate, she calls first to the lion; for fear of death he draws not near to her. Again she calls the dragon, but neither does he go; and even so all the beasts both small and great. She pipes sweetly and sings with charm beyond all; lastly she utters human voice: "Come, sate fleshly desire, ye men, of my beauty, and I of yours." The men, knowing then their opportunity against her, lay snares that she may lose her pleasure; and stand afar off, that they may not see her, and raise their voice and cry and say unto her: "Dig a deep pit and put thy head therein, that we may not die and may come with thee." She straightway then goes and makes a great hole and puts her head therein and leaves her body; from the waist downward it is seen naked; so she remains and awaits the pains of lewdness. The man goes from behind, cuts off her head, holds it face downward, and places it in a vessel, and if he meet dragon or lion or leopard, he shows the head, and the beasts die.'

These modern or mediaeval descriptions of the Gorgons, though they are by no means consistent one with another, offer four main aspects in which the modern Gorgon may be compared with the creatures of ancient mythology. Her face is terrible either in its surpassing loveliness or in its overwhelming hideousness. She possesses the gift of entrancing melody. She is voluptuous. She dwells in the sea.

The first aspect may be derived directly from the ancient conception of the Gorgons. The word Γοργώ itself is a name formed from the adjective γοργός and means simply 'fierce' or

[1] Published by E. Legrand in *Collection de monuments de la langue néo-hellénique*, no. 16, from two MSS. nos. 929 and 930 in Paris (Bibliothèque Nationale).

'terrible' in look, without implying anything of beauty or the opposite; while of Medusa, the Gorgon *par excellence*, tradition relates that once she was a beautiful maiden beloved of Poseidon, and that it was only through the wrath of Athena that her hair was changed into writhing snakes and her loveliness lost in horror. Moreover in ancient works of art the representation of the Gorgon's head varies from a type of cruel beauty to a grinning mask. But it is also possible that the idea of their beauty is due to a confusion of Gorgons with Sirens, from whom, as we shall see, certain traits have certainly been borrowed.

These traits are the two next aspects of the modern Gorgons which we have to consider, the sweetness of their singing and their voluptuousness. These were the essential qualities of the Sirens, and have undoubtedly been transferred to the Gorgons no less than to the Lamia of the Sea[1].

Possibly also from the same source comes the mixed shape, half woman and half fish, in which the Gorgon is now pourtrayed. The Sirens were indeed originally terrestrial, dwelling in a meadow near the sea, yet not venturing in the deep themselves, but luring men to shipwreck on the coast by the spell of their song; and an echo perhaps of this conception, though the Sirens themselves are no longer known, lives on in a folk-song which pictures the enchantment of a maiden's love-song wafted to seafarers' ears from off the shore: 'Thereby a ship was passing with sails outspread. Sailors that hearken to that voice and look upon such beauty, forget their sails and forsake their oars; they cannot voyage any more; they know not how to set sail[2].' But by the sixth century[3] the traditional habitat of the Sirens had changed. 'The Sirens,' says an anonymous work on monsters and great beasts, 'are mermaids, who by their exceeding beauty and winning song ensnare mariners; from the head to the navel they are of human and maidenly form, but they have the scaly tails of fishes[4].' This description establishes an unquestionable connexion between the Sirens and the modern Gorgons.

But the fourth aspect of the Gorgons on which I have to

[1] See above, p. 173.
[2] Passow, *Carm. Popul.* no. 337.
[3] The date assigned is, I believe, not certain, but is not of great importance.
[4] *De monstris et beluis*, edited by Berger de Xivrey in *Traditions Tératologiques*, p. 25. Πολίτης, *l.c.*

touch, their connexion with the sea, is not, I think, to be explained as another loan from the Sirens. On the contrary the Gorgons were it would seem deities of the sea, when the Sirens were still dwellers upon the shore; and it was their originally marine character which enabled them to absorb the qualities once attributed to the Sirens. Thus according to Hesiod[1] the three Gorgons were daughters of the sea-deities Phorcys and Ceto, and their home was at the western bound of Ocean. Further one of their number, Medusa, was loved by the sea-god Poseidon, and gave birth both to the horse Pegasus whose name may be a derivative of πήγη, 'water-spring,' and whose resort was certainly the fountain of Pirene[2], and also to Chrysaor whose bride was 'Callirrhoe, daughter of far-famed Ocean.' Whether this mythological problem is capable of solution in terms of natural phenomena[3] does not here concern us; but it is a straightforward and necessary inference from these genealogical data, that an early and intimate connexion existed between the Gorgons and the sea. And here art comes to the support of literature. In the National Museum of Athens are two vases of about the sixth century, depicting Gorgons in the company of dolphins. The first, an early Attic *amphora*[4], represents the three Gorgons, of whom Medusa appears headless, surrounded by a considerable number of them. The second, a *kylex*[5] with offset lip of the *Kleinmeister* type, pourtrays a single Gorgon with a dolphin on either side. These artistic presentments furnish the strongest possible corroboration of Hesiodic lore, and justify the assertion that from the earliest times the Gorgons were deities of the sea. It was clearly then in virtue of their own marine character that they were able later to usurp also the place of the Sirens.

But the Sirens are not the only ancient beings who have contributed to the formation of the popular conception of modern Gorgons. In one story[6] the personality of Scylla is unmistakeable beneath the disguise of name. This fusion is the more natural in that Scylla was from the beginning[7] a monster of the sea,

[1] *Theog.* 270—288. [2] Cf. Pind. *Ol.* XIII. 90.

[3] Kuhn in *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, vol. I. pp. 460–1, connects γοργώ with γάργαρα and Sanskr. *garya*, *garyana*, in sense of 'the noise of the waves.' Cf. Maury, *Hist. des relig. de la Grèce antique*, I. p. 303.

[4] No. 1002, found at Athens; date 600 B.C. or earlier.

[5] No. 534, from Corinth; date about 550 B.C.

[6] Πολίτης, *l.c.* p. 269. [7] Hom. *Od.* XII. 73 ff.

whose form, according to Vergil[1], terminated like that of latter-day Gorgons in a fish's tail; a monster too fully as terrible in her own way as any Gorgon. The following extract from the story contains all that is pertinent.

'So the lad departed and tramped on for twenty hours. Then he came to a village by the sea, and saw some men busy lading a boat with oil, and they were carrying on board each one a barrel. When he drew near to them, he said, "Can you carry but one barrel at a time, my good fellows? See how many I will carry." So saying, he took a barrel on each shoulder, and placed them in the boat. Then said the captain to him, "Thank you, my lad" (for he was afraid of him), "come and have some food." "No, thank you, captain," he replied, "I do not want any. But when you are passing yonder straits, please take me along with you." The captain was delighted to do so, for in the sea at that place there was a Gorgon, and from every boat that passed she took one man as toll and devoured him, or else swamped the whole boat. So they set out, and as they were going the captain said to the lad, "Take a turn at the tiller, my boy, that we may go and sleep, for we are tired." Accordingly they went below—to sleep, so they pretended—and the lad remained at the helm. Suddenly the boat stopped. He was looking about on each side when he heard a voice behind him. He turned at once and saw a beautiful woman with golden hair, who said to him, "Give me my tribute." "What tribute?" replied the lad. "The man whom I devour from each boat that passes." "Give me your hand," said the lad to her. Straightway without demur she gave it to him, and tried to pull him down into the sea. At this the lad grew angry. "Come up, you she-devil, come up here," he cried, and dashed her upon the deck. Then he belaboured her soundly, and said to her: "Swear to me that you will never molest man again, or I will not let you go." "I swear," she said, "by my mother the sea and by my father Alexander, that I will molest none." Then he threw her back into the sea.'

Apart from the description of the Gorgon in this story, as in others, as a 'beautiful woman with golden hair,' the tradition which has contributed chiefly to the invention of the episode is

[1] *Aen.* IV. 327.

the ancient myth of Scylla and, we may perhaps add, of Charybdis; for here too the straits are the scene of alternative horrors, either the devouring of one man out of the crew or the sinking of the whole craft.

But in spite of the fusion of both Scylla and the Sirens with the Gorgons in the crucible of popular imagination, analysis of the complex modern conception still reveals two elements in the Gorgons' nature which vindicate their claim to their ancient name, their association with the sea and the terror that they inspire.

## § 13. The Centaurs.

Ἀνάγκη μετὰ τοῦτο τὸ τῶν Ἱπποκενταύρων εἶδος ἐπανορθοῦσθαι.

Plato, *Phaedrus*, 7.

The Callicántzari (Καλλικάντζαροι) are the most monstrous of all the creatures of the popular imagination, and none are better known to the Greek-speaking world at large; for even where educated men have ceased to believe in them, they still figure in the stories told and retold to children with each recurring New Year's Day; and, among the peasants, many reach manhood or womanhood without outgrowing their early fears of them.

The name Callicantzaros itself appears in many dialectic and widely differing forms, and there are also a multitude of local by-names. Of the former I shall treat later in discussing the origin of the word Callicantzaros, while the by-names, being for the most part descriptive of the appearance or qualities of these monsters, will be mentioned as occasion requires. But even where other local names are in common use, some form of the word Callicantzaros is almost always employed as well, or at least is understood.

As in the nomenclature, so too in the description of the Callicantzari, one locality differs very widely from another. And this cannot be merely a result of the wide distribution of the belief in them; for the Nereids certainly are equally widely known, and yet their appearance and habits are, broadly speaking, everywhere the same. The extraordinary divergences and even contradictions in different accounts of the Callicantzari demand

some other explanation than that of casual variation. That explanation, as I shall show later, lies in their identity with the ancient Centaurs. But before I discuss their origin, I must attempt as general a description of their appearance and habits as the vast variation of local traditions permits. In revising this description I have had the advantage of consulting Prof. Polites' new work on the traditions of modern Greece[1], from which I have learnt some new facts, and have obtained on several points confirmation from a new source of what I had myself heard or surmised. I take this opportunity of gratefully acknowledging my indebtedness to him.

In describing the Callicantzari, although the diversities of their outward form are almost endless, two main classes of them must be distinguished, because corresponding with that physical division there is also a marked difference in character. The two classes differ physically in stature, and, while all Callicantzari are essentially mischievous in character, the mischief wrought by the larger sort is often of a malicious and even deadly order, while the smaller sort are more frolicsome and harmless in their tricks.

The larger kind vary from the size of a man to that of a gigantic monster whose loins are on a level with the chimney-pots. They are usually black in colour, and covered with a coat of shaggy hair, but a bald variety is also sometimes mentioned. Their heads and also their sexual organs are out of all proportion to the rest of their bodies. Their faces are black; their eyes glare red; they have the ears of goats or asses; from their huge mouths blood-red tongues loll out, flanked by ferocious tusks. Their bodies are in general very lean, so that in some districts the word Callicantzaros is applied metaphorically to a very lean man[2]; but a shorter and thickset variety also occurs. They have the arms and hands of monkeys, and their nails are as long again as their fingers and curved like the talons of a vulture. They are sometimes furnished with long thin tails. They have the legs of a goat or an ass, or sometimes one human leg and one of bestial form; or again both legs are of human shape, but the foot so distorted that the

[1] Παραδόσεις, part ii. of the series Μελέται περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ.

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. p. 1293.

toes come where the heel should be[1]. Hence it is not surprising that they are often lame, but even so they are swift of foot and terrible in strength. 'They devour their road at the pace of Pegasus,' wrote Leo Allatius[2]; and at the present day several by-names bear witness to their speed. In Samos they are called Καλλισπούδηδες[3], 'those who make good speed'; in Cyprus Πλανήταροι[4], 'the wanderers'; in Athens they have the humorous title Κωλοβελόνηδες, formed from the proverbial expression *βελόνια ἔχει 'στὸν κῶλο του*, 'he has needles in his buttocks,' said of any one who cannot sit still, but is always on the move[5]. Their strength also has earned them one by-name, reported from Kardamýle in Maina, *τὰ τσιλικρωτά*, said to be formed from the Turkish *tselik* ('iron'), in the sense of 'strong as iron[6].'

All or any of the features which I have mentioned may be found in the person of a single Callicantzaros; but it must be allowed also that no one of them is essential. For sometimes the Callicantzaros appears in ordinary human form without so much as a cloven hoof to distinguish him from ordinary mankind, or again completely in animal shape. In one place they are described as *ἀγριάνθρωποι*[7], savages but human in appearance, while in another they are *ἄγρια τετράποδα*[8], 'savage quadrupeds.'

Yet in general the Callicantzari are neither wholly anthropomorphic nor wholly theriomorphic, but a blend of the two. In a story of some men at Athens who dressed themselves up as Callicantzari, it is said that they blacked their faces and covered themselves with feathers[9]. Again two grotesque and bestial clay statuettes from the Cabirium near Thebes and now in the National Museum at Athens, were identified by peasants as Callicantzari[10]; an identification I have also met with when questioning peasants about similar objects in local museums; in one case it was a Satyr and in another a Centaur which my guide identified as a Callicantzaros. On the whole I should say that the goat con-

[1] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. 1295.
[2] *De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. ix.
[3] Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. 1245.
[4] *Ibid.* II. 1245. It might equally well however, as Polites suggests, mean 'deceivers,' from the active πλανάω, 'to lead astray.'
[5] So explained by Πολίτης, *op. cit.* 1247.
[6] *Ibid.* II. 1245.
[7] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 370 (from Syra).
[8] *Ibid.* II. 1293 (from Myconos).
[9] Καμπούρογλου, Ἴστ. τῶν Ἀθην. I. p. 230.
[10] Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. p. 1291. In the Museum they are numbered 10333–4.

tributes more than any other animal to the popular conception of these monsters. Besides having the legs and the ears of goats, as was noted above, they are sometimes said to have their horns also; and in Chios their resemblance to goats is so clearly recognised that in one village they have earned the by-name of Κατσικᾶδες[1], which by formation should mean 'men who have to do with goats (*κατσίκια*),' though it has apparently been appropriated to the designation of beings who are in form half goat and half man. There are however districts, as we shall see later, in which some other animal than the goat forms the predominant element in the monstrous *ensemble*.

The smaller sort of Callicantzari is rarer than the large, but their distribution is at any rate wide. They are the predominant type in north-west Arcadia, in the district about Mount Parnassus, and at Oenoë[2] on the southern shore of the Black Sea. They are most often human in shape, but are mere pigmies, no taller than a child of five or six. They are usually black, like the larger sort, but are smooth and hairless. They are very commonly deformed, and in this respect the strange beasts on which they ride are like them. At Arachova[3], on the slopes of Parnassus, every one of them is said to have some physical defect. Some are lame; others squint; others have only one eye; others have their noses or mouths, hands or feet set all askew; and as a cavalcade of them passes by night through the village, one is to be seen mounted on a cock and his long thin legs trail on the ground as he rides; another has a horse no bigger than a small dog; another, the tiniest of them all, is perched on an enormous donkey's back, and when he falls off cannot mount again; and others again ride strange unknown beasts, lame, one-eyed, or one-eared like their masters.

Callicantzari of this type are usually harmless to men. They play indeed the same boisterous pranks as their larger brethren, but perhaps owing to their insignificant size are an object of merriment rather than of fear. But, as I shall show later, there is reason to believe that they are not the original type of Callicantzari. It is only by a casual development of the superstition, that these grotesque hobgoblins have been locally sub-

[1] Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, p. 367. [2] Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. p. 1323.
[3] Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 148, and Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 333.

stituted for the grim and gaunt monsters feared elsewhere. They form, as it were, a modern and expurgated edition of the larger sort of Callicantzari, to whom I now return.

The Callicantzari appear only during the δωδεκαήμερον or 'period of twelve days' between Christmas and Epiphany[1]. The rest of the year they live in the lower world, and occupy themselves in trying to gnaw through or cut down the great tree (or in other accounts the one or more columns) on which the world rests. Each Christmas they have nearly completed their task, when the time comes for their appearance in the upper world, and during their twelve days' absence, the supports of the world are made whole again.

Even during their short visit to this world, they do not appear in the daytime. From dawn till sunset they hide themselves in dark and dank places—in caves or beneath mills—and there feed on such food as they can collect, worms, snakes, frogs, tortoises, and other unclean things. But at night they issue forth and run wildly to and fro, rending and crushing those who cross their path. Destruction and waste, greed and lust mark their course. Now they break into some lonely mill, terrify and coerce the miller into showing them his store, bake for themselves cakes thereof, befoul with urine all that they cannot use, and are gone again. Now they pass through some hamlet, and woe to that house which is not prepared against their coming. By chimney and door alike they swarm in, and make havoc of the home; in sheer wanton mischief they overturn and break all the furniture, devour the Christmas pork, befoul all the water and wine and food which remains, and leave the occupants half dead with fright or violence. Now it is a wine shop that they enter, bind the publican to his chair, gag him with dung, break open each cask in turn, drink their fill, and leave the wine running. Now they light upon some belated wayfarer, and make sport of him as their fancy leads them. Sometimes his fate is only to dance all night with the Callicantzari and to be let go at cockcrow unscathed; for these monsters despite their uncouth shape delight in dancing, and to that end often seek the company of the Nereids; but more often men are sorely torn and battered before they escape,

[1] Leo Allatius (*De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. ix.) makes the period a week only, ending on New Year's Day.

and women are forcibly carried off to be the monsters' wives. In some accounts they even make a meal of their human prey.

The fact that the activities of the Callicantzari are always limited to the night-time has given them a special claim to the name Παρωρίταις or Νυχτοπαρωρίταις[1], formed from *πάρωρα*, 'the hour before cockcrow,' for then it is that their excesses and depredations have reached their zenith; but the word cannot correctly be called a by-name of the Callicantzari, for it is also, if more rarely, applied to other nocturnal visitants.

The only redeeming qualities in these creatures' characters, from the point of view of men who fall into their clutches, are their stupidity and their quarrelsomeness. They have indeed a chieftain who sometimes tries to marshal and to discipline them, and who is at least wise enough to warn them when the hour of their departure draws near. But in general 'the Great Callicantzaros[2],' as he is called, or 'the lame demon[3],' is too like the rest of them to be of much avail; and indeed his place is not at the head of the riotous mob where he might control them, but he limps along, a grotesque and usually ithyphallic figure, in the rear. Thus in the popular stories it often happens that either the Callicantzari go on quarrelling about the treatment of some man or the possession of some woman whom they have captured, or else their prisoner is shrewd enough to keep them amused, until cock-crow brings release. For at that sound (or, to be more precise, at the crowing of the third cock, who is black and more potent to scare away demons than the white and red cocks who precede him[4]) they vanish away, like all terrors of the night in ancient[5] as well as modern times, to their dark lairs.

The tales told by the peasants about the Callicantzari are extremely numerous, though there is a certain sameness about the main themes. Three types of story however are deserving

[1] For dialectic varieties of this name from Macedonia, the Peloponnese, Crete, and some of the Cyclades, see Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. 1256.

[2] *ὁ μεγάλος* or *ὁ πρῶτος καλλικάντζαρος*. Also, according to Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 369, *ὁ ἀρχικαλλικάντζαρος*. In Constantinople (acc. to Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. 343) he has a proper name Μαντρακοῦκος, which however I cannot interpret satisfactorily.

[3] *ὁ κουτσοδαίμονας*, or simply *ὁ κουτσὸς*, *ὁ χωλός*. Cf. B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, pp. 152–4.

[4] The sequence of these cocks varies locally; their order is sometimes black, white, red.

[5] Lucian, *Philops.* cap. 14.

of notice, to illustrate the character of the Callicantzari and the ways in which they may be outwitted and eluded.

The first type may be represented by a tale told to me in Scyros in explanation of the name of a cave some half-hour distant from the town. Both the cave itself and that part of the path which lies just below it are popularly called *τοῦ καλλικαντζάρου τὸ ποδάρι*, 'the Callicantzaros' foot.' My enquiries concerning the name elicited the following story, which seems incidentally to explain how the Great Callicantzaros came to be lame.

'Once upon the eve of Epiphany a man of Scyros was returning home from a mill late at night, driving his mule before him laden with two sacks of meal. When he had gone about half-way, he saw before him some Callicantzari in his path. Realising his danger, he at once got upon his mule and laid himself flat between the two sacks and covered himself up with a rug, so as to look like another sack of meal. Soon the Callicantzari were about his mule, and he held his breath and heard them saying, "Here is a pack on this side and a pack on that side, and the top-load in the middle, but where is the man?" So they ran back to the mill thinking that he had loitered behind; but they could not find him and came back after the mule, and looked again, and said, "Here is a pack on this side and a pack on that side, and the top-load in the middle, but where is the man?" So they ran on in front fearing that he had hasted on home before his mule. But when they could not find him, they returned again, and said as before, and went back a second time towards the mill. And thus it happened many times. Now while they were running to and fro, the mule was nearing home, and it so happened that when the beast stopped at the door of the man's house, the Callicantzari were close on his track. The man therefore called quickly to his wife and she opened the door and he entered in safety, but the mule was left standing without. Then the Callicantzari saw how he had tricked them, and they knocked at the door in great anger. So the woman, fearing lest they would break in by force, promised to open to them on condition that they should first count for her the holes in her sieve. To this they agreed, and she let it down to them by a cord from a window. Straightway they set to work to count, and counted round and round the outermost circle and

never got nearer to the middle; nor could they discover how this came to pass, but only counted more and more hurriedly, without advancing at all. Meanwhile dawn was breaking, and so soon as the neighbours perceived the Callicantzari, they hurried off to the priests and told them. The priests immediately set out with censers and sprinkling-vessels in their hands, to chase the Callicantzari away. Right through the town the monsters fled, spreading havoc in their path and hotly pursued by the priests. At last when they were clear of the town, one Callicantzaros began to lag behind, and by a great exertion the foremost priest came up to him and struck him on the hinder foot with his sprinkling vessel. At once the foot fell off, but the Callicantzaros fled away maimed though he was. And thus the spot came to be known as "the Callicantzaros' foot."'

This story consists of three episodes. The first, in which the driver of the mule outwits the Callicantzari by lying flat on the animal's back and making himself look like a sack of meal, occurs time after time in the popular tales with hardly any variation; indeed it often forms in itself the *motif* of a whole story, in which, as soon as the man reaches his home, the cock crows and the Callicantzari flee. The second episode in which the wife effects some delay by bargaining with the Callicantzari that they shall count the holes in a sieve, is also fairly common, but the difficulty which the monsters find, in every other version of which I know, is that they dare not pronounce the word 'three,' and so go on counting 'one, two,' 'one, two' till cock-crow[1]. The third episode in which the priests chase away the Callicantzari is not often found in current stories, but the belief that the ἁγιασμός or 'hallowing' which takes place on the morning of Epiphany is the signal for the final departure of the Callicantzari is firmly held throughout Greece. This ceremony consists primarily in 'blessing the waters'—whether of the sea, of rivers, of village-wells, or, as at Athens, of the reservoir—by carrying a cross in procession to the appointed place and throwing it in; but in many districts also the priests afterwards fill vessels with the blest waters, and with these and their censers make a round of the village, sprinkling and purifying the people and their houses and cornfields and

[1] So Leo Allatius, *De quor. Graec. opin.* cap. ix.

vineyards. The fear which the Callicantzari feel of this purification is embodied in some rough lines which they are supposed to chant as they disappear at Twelfth-night:

φύγετε, νὰ φύγουμε,
τ' ἔφτασ' ὁ τουρλόπαπας
μὲ τὴν ἁγιαστοῦρα του
καὶ μὲ τὴ βρεχτοῦρα του,
κι' ἅγιασε τὰ ῥέμματα
καὶ μᾶς ἐμαγάρισε[1].

Quick, begone! we must begone,
Here comes the pot-bellied priest,
With his censer in his hand
And his sprinkling-vessel too;
He has purified the streams
And he has polluted us.

In the actual tales however as told by the people the intervention of the priests is not a common episode. More often the story ends in a rescue effected by neighbours armed with firebrands, of which the Callicantzari go in mortal terror, or simply with the crowing of the black cock.

The second type of story deals with the adventures of a girl sent by her wicked stepmother to a mill during the dangerous Twelve Days, nominally to get some corn ground, but really in the hope that she will fall a prey to the Callicantzari. Having arrived at the mill the girl calls in vain to the miller to come and help unload her mule, and entering in search of him finds him bound to his chair or dead with fright and the Callicantzari standing about him. They at once seize the girl, and begin to quarrel which shall have her for his own. But the girl keeps her wits, and says that she will be the wife of the one who brings her the best bridal array. So they disperse in search of fine raiment and jewels. Meanwhile she sets to work to grind the corn, and each time a Callicantzaros returns with presents, she sends him on a fresh errand for something more. Finally the corn is all ground, and she quickly loads the mule with two sacks, one on either side, clothes herself in the gold and jewels which the Callicantzari have brought, mounts the mule and lies flat on the saddle covered over with a sack, and eluding the Callicantzari who pursue her, like the muleteer in the previous story, reaches home in safety.

[1] Several other versions in the same vein are recorded, cf. B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 151, Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. pp. 337–41 and II. p. 1305.

The wicked stepmother seeing that her plans have miscarried and that her stepdaughter is now rich while her own daughter is poor, determines to send the latter the next evening to the mill. She too finds the mill occupied by the Callicantzari, but not being so shrewd as her half-sister either falls a victim to the lust of the monsters, or is killed and eaten by them, or, in one version[1], is stripped of her own clothes, dressed in the skin of her mule which the Callicantzari have killed and flayed, and sent home with a necklace of the mule's entrails about her neck.

The third type of story, one which is known all over Greece, introduces us to the domestic circle of a Callicantzaros. A midwife is roused one night during the Twelve Days by a furious rapping at her door, and, imagining that the call is urgent, slips on her clothes in haste without enquiring who it is that needs her services, and stepping out of her door finds herself face to face either with an unmistakeable Callicantzaros who seizes her and carries her off, or else with a man unknown to her who subsequently proves to be a Callicantzaros[2]. On their way to his home he bids her see to it that the child with which his wife is about to present him be male; in that case he will reward her handsomely; but if a female child be born, he will devour the midwife. Arrived at the cave or house where the Callicantzaros dwells, the midwife goes about her task, and the Callicantzaros' wife is soon delivered of a child; but to the midwife's horror it is female. Her wits however do not desert her, and she quickly devises a scheme for her escape. Taking a candle, she warms it and fashions from the wax a model of the male organs and fastens it to the child. Then calling the Callicantzaros, she tells him that a fine male child is born and holds up the infant for him to see. Thereat he is content and bids her swaddle it. This done, she craves leave to go home, and the Callicantzaros, true to his word, rewards her with a sack of gold and lets her go.

The conclusion of the story varies. In some versions, the fraud is discovered before the midwife reaches her home, the Callicantzaros curses the gold which he has given her, and when she opens her sack she finds nothing but ashes. In others, she reaches home in safety with the gold and by magic means breaks

[1] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 372.
[2] For this version see Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. I. p. 229.

the power of the Callicantzaros over his gift; and when he arrives at her door in hot pursuit, she has already taken all precautions against his entrance and lies secure and silent within.

The wife of the Callicantzaros here mentioned is in some stories pictured as being of the same monstrous species as himself, in others as an ordinary woman whom he has seized and carried off. But, apart from these stories in which she is a necessary *persona dramatis*, she has no hold upon the popular imagination. A feminine word, *καλλικαντζαρίνα* or *καλλικαντζαροῦ*, has been formed in this case just as the word *νεραΐδης*[1] has been formed as masculine of Nereid (*νεράϊδα*), and female Callicantzari are as rare and local as male Nereids. Their existence is assumed only as complementary to that of their mates.

Security from the Callicantzari is sought by many methods, some of them Christian in character, others magical or pagan. Foremost among Christian precautions is the custom of marking a cross in black upon the house-door on Christmas Eve; and the same emblem is sometimes painted upon the various jars and vessels in which food is kept to ensure them against befouling by the Callicantzari, and even upon the forehead of infants, especially if they are unbaptised, to prevent them from being stolen or strangled[2] by the monsters. If in spite of these precautions the inmates of any house are troubled by them, the burning of incense is accounted an effectual safeguard. For out-door use, if a man is unfortunate enough to encounter Callicantzari, an invocation of the Trinity or the recitation of three Paternosters is recommended.

But precautions of a more pagan character are often preferred to these or combined with them. Ordinary prudence demands that the fire be kept burning through all the Twelve Days, to prevent the Callicantzari entering by the chimney, and the usual custom is to set one huge log on end up the chimney, to go on burning for the whole period. In addition to this a fire is sometimes kept burning at night close by the house-door. Certain herbs also, such as ground-thistle[3], hyssop, and asparagus[4], may be suspended at the door or the chimney-place, as magical charms. If even then there is reason to suspect that Callicantzari are

[1] See above, p. 149. [2] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 338 (from Samos).
[3] Mod. Gk χαμολιό, Anc. χαμαιλέων.
[4] Ἐφημ. τῶν Φιλομαθῶν, 1862, p. 1909.

prowling round the house, the golden rule is to observe strict silence and, above all, not to answer any question asked from without the door; for it is commonly believed that the Callicantzari, like the Nereids, can deprive of speech any who have once talked with them. At the same time it is wise to make up the fire, throwing on either something which will crackle like salt or heather[1], or something which will smell strong, such as a bit of leather, an old shoe, wild-cherry wood[2], or ground-thistle; for the stench of these is as unbearable to the Callicantzari as that of incense.

Such at any rate is the current explanation of the purpose of these malodorous combustibles; but in view of the notorious gullibility of the Callicantzari I am tempted to surmise that both the crackling and the smell were originally intended to pacify them for a while with the delusive hope that a share of the Christmas pork, their favourite food, was being prepared for them. For certainly even now propitiatory presents to the Callicantzari are not unknown. At Portariá and other villages of Mount Pelion it is the custom to hang a rib or other bone from the pork inside the chimney 'for the Callicantzari,' but whether as a means of appeasement or of aversion the people seem no longer to know: in Samos however the first sweetmeats made at the New Year are placed in the chimney avowedly as food for the Callicantzari[3], and in Cyprus waffles and sausages are put in the same place as a farewell feast to them on the Eve of Epiphany[4]. Moreover in earlier times the custom of appeasing them with food was undoubtedly more widespread; for in places where, so far as I know, the custom itself no longer exists, a few lines supposed to be sung by the Callicantzari on the eve of their departure are still remembered, in which they ask for 'a little bit of sausage, a morsel of waffle, that the Callicantzari may eat and depart to their own place[5].'

But propitiation of the Callicantzari, in spite of this evidence of offerings made to them, is certainly not now so much in vogue as precautions against them; and it is perhaps simpler to suppose that the choice of crackling or odorous fuel was originally prompted by the intention of conveying to the Callicantzari a plain warning

[1] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. 347.
[2] *Ibid.* I. 356.
[3] *Ibid.* I. 338.
[4] *Ibid.* I. 342.
[5] ψίχα, ψίχα λουκάνικο, κομμάτι ξεροτήγανο, νὰ φᾶν οἱ Καλλικάντζαροι, νὰ φύγουνε 'στὸν τόπο τους. For other versions see B. Schmidt, *Das Volksl.* p. 150, and Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. 342.

that the fire within the house was burning briskly; for apart from the Christian means of defence—crosses, incense, invocations and the general purification on the morning of Epiphany—it may be said that the one thing which they really fear is fire. Everywhere it is held that so long as a good fire is kept burning on the hearth the Callicantzari cannot gain access to the house by their favourite entrance; and that the utmost they will venture is to vent their urine down the chimney in the hope of extinguishing the fire. For this reason the wood-ashes from the hearth, which are generally stored up and used in the washing of clothes, are during the Twelve Days left untouched, and after the purification at Epiphany are carried out of the house; but in some districts[1], though the ashes are not thought suitable for ordinary use, they are not thrown away as worthless impurities, but, owing I suppose to their contact with supernatural beings, are held to be endowed with magically fertilising properties and are sprinkled over the very same fields and gardens which the priests have sprinkled with holy water. Again there are not a few stories current[2] in which a Callicantzaros, attracted to some house at Christmas-tide by the smell of roasting pork, has been put to rout by having the hot joint or the spit on which it was turning thrust in his face. In one version also of the song which the Callicantzari are supposed to sing as they depart, 'the pot-bellied priest with censer and sprinkling-vessel' is accompanied by his wife carrying hot water to scald them[3]. In other stories again the rescue of a man from the clutches of Callicantzari is effected by his neighbours with fire-brands as their only weapons; and where such help cannot be obtained, a man may sometimes free himself merely by ejaculating *ξύλα, κούτσουρα, δαυλιὰ καμμένα*, 'sticks, logs, and brands ablaze!' for the very thought of fire will sometimes scare the monsters away.

Other safeguards are also mentioned; you are recommended for instance to keep a black cock in the house, or you may render the Callicantzaros harmless by binding him with a red thread or a straw rope[4]; but the latter method would in most cases be like putting salt on a bird's tail.

[1] Cf. Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην.* III. 154.
[2] Cf. Πολίτης, *Παραδόσεις*, I. p. 357.
[3] *Ibid.* II. p. 1308.
[4] Abbott, *Maced. Folklore*, p. 74.

Such, on a general view, are the monsters whose origin I now propose to examine; and the first step in the investigation must be to account for the extraordinary variations in shape exhibited by the Callicantzari in different districts.

I have already observed that the Callicantzari are sometimes conceived to be of ordinary human form, but that more commonly there is an admixture of something beast-like. Among the animals which are laid under contribution, first comes the he-goat, from which the Callicantzari borrow ears, horns, and legs. Almost equally common is a presentment of Callicantzari with the ears and the legs of an ass combined with a body in other respects human; or again the head of an ass, according to Pouqueville[1], may be combined with the body and legs of a man. In other districts again the wolf has once been a factor in the conception of Callicantzari. Thus in Messenia, in Cynouria (a district in the east of Laconia), and in parts of Crete[2] the Callicantzari are called also Λυκοκάντζαροι, in which the first half of the compound name is undoubtedly λύκος, 'wolf.' Similarly in some parts of Macedonia Callicantzari are often called simply 'wolves' (λύκοι), and both names are also applied metaphorically to any particularly ill-favoured man[3]. Resemblances to apes are also mentioned, particularly in the long, lean, hairy arms of the Callicantzari; and Pouqueville speaks also of their monkey-like tails[4]. Next from Phoeniciá in Epirus comes the suggestion that Callicantzari may resemble squirrels; for there they have the two by-names σκιορίσματα and καψιούρηδες[5], in which it is not hard to recognise the two ancient Greek names for the squirrel, σκίουρος and καμψίουρος. Concerning the local character of these I have no information; but it is fairly safe to surmise that they possess the power, commonly ascribed to the smaller sort of Callicantzari, of climbing with great dexterity the walls and roofs of houses in order to gain access by the chimney. Finally in Myconos, as noted above, the Callicantzari are described as 'savage four-footed things'—a description which need not exclude some human attributes any more than it does in the savage four-footed Centaurs of ancient

[1] *Voyage de la Grèce*, VI. p. 157.
[2] Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρ. τῆς Ἑλλάδος, II. pp. 137—141.
[3] Ἰ. Μιχαήλ, Μακεδονικά, p. 39. Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. 1251 note 2.
[4] *loc. cit.* [5] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. III. pp. 66 and 156.

art, but implies it would seem at least a predominance of the bestial over the human element.

What then is the explanation of these wide divergences of type? The answer is really very simple and final. The Callicantzari were originally believed to possess the power, which many supernatural beings share, of transforming themselves at their pleasure into any shape. The shapes most commonly assumed differed in different districts, and gradually, as the belief in the metamorphosis of Callicantzari here, there, and almost everywhere was forgotten, what had once been the commonest form locally assumed by Callicantzari became in the several districts their fixed and only form.

The correctness of this explanation was first proved to me by information obtained from the best source for all manner of stories and traditions about the Callicantzari, the villages on Mount Pelion. There I was definitely told that the Callicantzari are believed to have the power of assuming any monstrous shape which they choose; and the accuracy of this statement is, I find, now confirmed by information obtained independently by Prof. Polites[1] from one of these same villages, Portariá; he adds that there the shapes most frequently affected by Callicantzari are those of women, bearded men, and he-goats. Further evidence of the same belief existing also in Cyprus is adduced by the same writer. 'The Planetari (*πλανήταροι*),' so runs the popular tradition which he quotes from a work which I have been unable to consult, 'who are also called in some parts of Cyprus Callicantzari, come to the earth at Christmas and remain all the Twelve Days. They are seen by persons who are *ἀλαφροστοίχειωτοι*[2] (i.e., to give the nearest equivalent, 'fey'). Sometimes they appear as dogs, sometimes as hares, sometimes as donkeys or as camels, and often as bobbins. Men who are 'fey' stumble over them, and stoop down to pick them up, when suddenly the bobbin rolls along of its own accord and escapes them. Further on it turns into a donkey or camel and goes on its way. The man

[1] Παραδόσεις, 1. p. 334.

[2] The word means literally men whose attendant *genii* (*στοιχειά*, on which see the next section) are 'light' (*ἀλαφρός*) instead of being solid and steady. The temperament of such persons is ill-balanced in ordinary affairs, but peculiarly sensitive to supernatural influences; it often involves the gift of second sight and other similar faculties.

is deceived (by its appearance) and mounts it, and the donkey grows as tall as a mountain and throws the man down from a great height[1], and he returns home half-dead, and if he does not die outright, he will be an invalid all his life[2].'

Linguistic evidence is also forthcoming that the same belief in the metamorphosis of these monsters was once held both in Epirus and in Samos. The by-name *σκιορίσματα*, recorded from Phoeniciá, proves more than the squirrel-form of Callicantzari; it implies that that shape is not natural but assumed. From the ancient word *σκίουρος* comes by natural formation an hypothetical verb *σκιουρίζω*, 'I become a squirrel,' and thence the existing substantive *σκιούρισμα* or *σκιόρισμα* (for this difference in vocalisation is negligible in modern Greek) meaning 'that which has turned into a squirrel.' Similarly in Samos the by-name *κακανθρωπίσματα* means 'those that have turned into evil men.' Whether the belief implied by these names is still alive in Epirus, I do not know; in Samos it has apparently died out, for the word *κακανθρωπίσματα* is popularly there interpreted to mean 'those who do evil to men[3]'—a meaning which the formation really precludes.

Since then the belief that Callicantzari possess the power of metamorphosis either obtains now or has once obtained in places as far removed from one another as Phoeniciá in Epirus, Mount Pelion, Samos, and Cyprus, it is reasonable to conclude that this quality was in earlier times universally attributed to them, and therewith the whole problem of their multifarious presentments in different districts is at once solved.

The next question which arises is this; if the various forms in which the Callicantzari are locally represented are, so to speak, so many disguises assumed by them at their own will, what is the normal form of the Callicantzaros when he is not exercising his power of self-transformation? On reviewing the various shapes assumed, one fact stands out clearly; it is the animal attributes of the Callicantzari which are variable, while the human element in their composition (with a possible exception in the case of the

[1] Supernatural donkeys with the same habits are known also in Crete under the name of *ἀνασκελᾶδες* (prob. formed from *ἀνάσκελα*, 'on one's back,' the position in which the rider soon finds himself).

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. p. 342, from Γ. Λουκᾶς, Φιλολ. *ἐπισκ.* p. 12.

[3] Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. 338.

'savage quadrupeds' of Myconos) is constant. But the variation of form results, as has been shown, from the power of transformation. Therefore the animal characteristics, which are variable, are the characteristics assumed at pleasure by the Callicantzari, and the constant or human element in their composition indicates their normal form. In other words, the Callicantzaros in his original and natural shape was anthropomorphic, as indeed he is sometimes still represented to be.

And here too, while the various types of Callicantzari are still before us, it is worth while to notice, at the cost of a short digression, a curious principle which seems to govern the representation of Callicantzari in those districts in which the belief in their power of metamorphosis has been lost. On Mount Pelion and in Cyprus the shapes which the Callicantzari are said to assume at will are those of known and familiar objects—in the former place of women, bearded men, and he-goats, in the latter of dogs, hares, donkeys, and camels—but always complete and single shapes whether of man or beast; on the other hand in the large majority of places in which the remembrance of this power of transformation is lost, the Callicantzari are represented in fanciful and abnormal shapes—hybrids as it were between men and such animals as goat, ass, or ape. What appears to have happened in these cases is that, as the belief in the metamorphosis of Callicantzari was lost from the local folklore, a sort of compensation was made by depicting them arrested in the process of transformation, arrested halfway in the transition from man to beast. Now there are very few parts of Greece in which this change in the superstition has not taken place; and each island of the Greek seas, each district of the Greek mainland —I had almost said each village, for the folklore like the dialect of two villages no more than an hour's journey apart may differ widely—may be fairly considered to furnish separate instances on which a general principle can be founded. The law then which seems to me to have governed the evolution of Greek folklore is this, that a being of some single, normal, and known shape who has originally been believed capable of transforming himself into one or more other single, normal, and known shapes, comes to be represented, when the belief in his power of transformation dies out, as a being of composite, abnormal, and fantastic shape,

combining incongruous features of the several single, normal, and known shapes.

How wide may be the application of this principle, I cannot pretend to determine; but obviously it may supply the solution of certain puzzles in ancient Greek mythology. The goddess Athene, to take but one instance, is in Homer regularly described as γλαυκῶπις, an epithet which, though interpreted by ancient artists in the sense of 'blue-eyed' or 'gray-eyed,' seems, in view of Athene's connexion with the owl, to have meant originally 'owl-faced'; for the sake of argument at any rate, without entering into the controversy on the subject, let me assume this; let it be granted that the goddess was once depicted as a maiden with an owl's face. How is this hybrid form to be explained? If our principle holds here, the explanation is that in a still earlier stage of Greek mythology the goddess Athene was wont to transform herself into an owl and so manifest herself to her worshippers, just as in early Christian tradition it is recorded that once 'the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove[1].'

But this digression is long enough. Later in this chapter I shall have occasion to return to the principle which has been formulated. At present the Callicantzari are calling.

Thus far our investigation has shown us that the Callicantzari were originally anthropomorphic, possessing indeed and exercising the power of transmutation into beast-form, but in their natural and normal form completely human in appearance. What therefore remains to be determined is whether these beings were anthropomorphic demons or simply men.

On this point there is a direct conflict of evidence at the present day. The very common tradition that the Callicantzari come from the lower world at Christmas and are driven back there by the purification at Epiphany; the fact that they are often mentioned under the vague names παγανά and ξωτικά which have already been discussed[2], and that their leader is sometimes called ὁ κουτσοδαίμονας, 'the halting demon'; the belief that they are fond of dancing with the Nereids, and sometimes exercise also a power, proper to the Nereids, of taking away the speech of those who speak in their presence; these and other such

[1] Luke iii. 22. [2] Cf. above, p. 67.

considerations might be thought abundantly to prove that the Callicantzari were a species of demon.

But on the other hand there is equally abundant evidence of the belief that Callicantzari are men who are seized with a kind of bestial madness which often effects a beast-like alteration in their appearance. This madness is not chronic, but recurrent with each returning Christmas, and the victim of it displays for the time being all the savage and lustful passions of a wild animal. The mountaineers of South Euboea for example have acquired the reputation of being Callicantzari and are much feared by the dwellers on the coast.

A remarkable feature in this form of the superstition is the idea that the madness is congenital. Children born on Christmas-day, or according to some accounts on any day between Christmas and Epiphany, are deemed likely to become Callicantzari. This, it is naively said, is the due punishment for the sin of a mother who has presumed to conceive and to bring forth at seasons sacred to the Mother of God; whence also the children are called *ἑορτοπιάσματα* or 'feast-stricken.' In Chios, in the seventeenth century, this superstition was so strong that extraordinary methods of barbarism were adopted to render such children harmless. They were taken, says Leo Allatius[1], to a fire which had been lighted in the market-place, and there the soles of their feet were exposed to the heat until the nails were singed and the danger of their attacks obviated. A modern and modified form of this treatment is to place the child in an oven and to light a fire outside to frighten it, and then to ask the question, 'Bread or meat?' If the child says 'bread,' all is well; but if he says 'meat,' he is believed to be possessed by a savage craving for human flesh, and the treatment is continued till he answers 'bread[2].'

These infant Callicantzari are particularly prone, it is said, to attack and kill their own brothers and sisters. Hence comes the by-name by which they are sometimes known, *ἀδερφοφᾶδες*, 'brother-eaters,' as also, according to Polites' interpretation, the name *κάηδες*, which is an equivalent for Callicantzari in several islands of the Aegean Sea. This word Polites holds to be the plural of the name Cain, and to denote 'brother-slayers'; but

[1] *De quorundam Graec. opinat.* cap. x.
[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. p. 1286.

inasmuch as a longer form καϊμπίλιδες appears side by side with κάηδες in Carpathos[1], I hesitate to accept this interpretation of the one while the other remains to me wholly unintelligible. At any rate to the people themselves the word has ceased to convey any idea of murderous propensities; for in the island of Syme, where the name is in use, the beings denoted by it are held to be harmless[2].

The issue before us is well summarised in two popular traditions which Polites adduces from Oenoë and from Tenos, and which are in clear mutual contradiction. The tradition of Oenoë begins thus: '"Leave-us-good-sirs" (Ἂς-ἐμᾶς-καλοί) is the name which we give them (the Callicantzari), though they are really evil demons (ξωτικά).' The tradition of Tenos opens with the words: 'The Callicantzari are not demons (ζωτ'κά)[3]; they are men; as New Year's Day approaches, they are stricken with a fit of madness and leave their houses and wander to and fro.' How are we to decide which of these two traditions is the older?

The evidence in favour of either is at the present day abundant; the two chief authorities on the subject, Schmidt and Polites, both acknowledge this; and, in my own experience, I should have difficulty in saying which view of the Callicantzari I have the more frequently heard expressed. On the mainland they are most commonly demons; in the islands of the Aegean, more usually human. But in a matter of this kind it would be of no value to count heads; even if the whole population of Greece could be polled on the question, the view of the majority would have no more value than that of the minority. The issue must be decided on other than numerical grounds.

And clearly the first consideration which suggests itself must be the nature of the earliest evidence on the subject. The earliest authority then is Leo Allatius[4], and his statement is in brief as

[1] Ἐμαν. Μανωλακάκης, Καρπαθιακά, p. 130.

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις I. p. 344.

[3] The word ζωτικά which is sometimes heard in the Cyclades is, I suspect, merely a corrupt form of ξωτικά (on which see above, p. 67); some writers however have derived it from the root of ζάω. But at any rate in usage it denotes the same class of beings as the commoner form ξωτικά.

[4] *op. cit.* cap. x. Actually the earliest reference to the Callicantzari which I have found occurs in *La description et histoire de l'isle de Scios ou Chios* by Jerosme Justinian, p. 61, where he says, *Ils tiennent...qu'il y a de certains esprits qui courent par les grands chemins, et sont nommez Calican, Saros.* But inasmuch as he does not record even the name correctly, his statement that these beings are *esprits* can have little weight as against that of Leo Allatius.

follows. Children born in the octave of Christmas are seized with a kind of madness; they rage to and fro with incredible swiftness; and their nails grow sharp like talons. To any wayfarer whom they meet they put the question 'Tow or lead?' If he answer 'tow,' he escapes unhurt; if he answer 'lead,' they crush him with all their power and leave him half-dead, lacerated by their talons.

Thus far the testimony of Leo Allatius distinctly favours the belief that Callicantzari are human and not demoniacal in origin; but at the same time it must be admitted that his statement was probably founded upon the particular traditions of his native island only and carries therefore less weight. The barbarous custom however which he next proceeds to describe is of some importance. He states that children born during the dangerous period between Christmas and New Year had the soles of their feet scorched until the nails were singed and so they could not become Callicantzari. Now there is a small but obvious inconsistency in this statement. Persons who scratch one another use, presumably, not their toe-nails but their finger-nails; and animals likewise employ the fore feet and not the hind feet. To scorch the feet therefore, and particularly the soles of the feet, is not a logical method of preventing the growth of talons. But on the other hand the treatment adopted might well be supposed to prevent the development of hoofs, such as in many parts of Greece the Callicantzari are still believed to have. In other words, the custom which Leo Allatius describes was not properly understood in his time. But a custom which has ceased to be properly understood and has had an inaccurate interpretation set upon it is necessarily of considerable age. Already therefore in the first half of the seventeenth century the custom which Allatius describes was of some antiquity; and the belief that children turn into Callicantzari, which is implied alike by the original meaning and by the later interpretation of the custom, was equally ancient. In Chios then at any rate the human origin of Callicantzari is a very old article of faith.

But more important for our consideration is the answer to be made to the following question; is it more probable, that Callicantzari, if they were originally demons, should have come in the belief of many people to be men, or that, being originally men, they should

have assumed in the belief of many people the rank of demons? Here, if I may trust the analogy of other instances in Greek folklore, my answer is decided. I know of no case in which a demon has lost status and been reduced to human rank; but I can name three several cases in which beings originally human have been elevated to the standing of demons. The human maiden Gello was the prototype of the class of female demons now known as Gelloudes. Striges (*στρίγγλαις*) are properly old women who by magical means can transform themselves into birds, but they too both in mediaeval and in modern times are frequently confused with demons. 'Arabs' (*Ἀράπηδες*), as the name itself implies, were originally nothing but men of colour, but they now form, as will be shown in the next section, a recognised class of *genii*. And if we turn from modern Greek folklore to ancient Greek religion, there also we find the tendency in the same direction. There men in plenty are elevated to the rank of hero, demon, or god, but the degradation of a demon to human rank is a thing unknown. In view of this strongly marked principle of Greek superstition or religion, it is impossible to come to any other conclusion than that the Callicantzari were originally not demons but men—men who either voluntarily or under the compulsion of a kind of madness chose or were forced to assume the shape and the character of beasts.

Having thus disposed of the problem presented by the various types of Callicantzari, we must next investigate the origin of the name itself. This investigation too is not a little complicated by the fact that the dialectic varieties of the name are fully as manifold and divergent as the various shapes which the monsters are locally believed to assume. There can be few words in the Greek language which better illustrate the difference in speech between one district and another. The most general form of the word, and one which is either used side by side with other dialectic forms or at least is understood in almost every district, is the form which I have used throughout this chapter *καλλικάντ-ζαρος* or, to transliterate it, Callicantzaros; but in reviewing all the dialectic varieties of the word, I find that there are only two out of the fourteen letters composing this word, which do not, in one dialect or another, suffer either modification of sound or change of position. The consonant *κ* in the first syllable and the vowel *α* in

the third are the only constant and uniform elements common to all dialects.

These dialectic forms demand consideration for the reason that some of the derivations proposed take as their starting-point not the common form καλλικάντζαρος but one of the rarer by-forms—a method which is evidently open to objection when it is seen, as the accompanying table of forms will show, that καλλικάντζαρος, besides being the common and normal form, is also the centre from which all the dialectic varieties radiate in different directions. In compiling my list of forms, however, I may abbreviate it by the omission of those which are a matter of calligraphic rather than of phonetic distinction. Thus the first two syllables of καλλικάντζαρος are often written καλι- or καλη-, but since ι and η represent exactly the same sound and λλ is very seldom distinguished from λ, I have uniformly written καλλι- even where my authority for the particular form uses some other spelling. On the other hand, as regards the use of τζ or τσ, between which there is a real if somewhat subtle difference in sound, I have retained the particular form which I have found recorded.

Starting then from the normal form καλ-λι-κάν-τζα-ρος, which I thus dismember for convenience of reference to its five syllables, I may classify the changes which the word undergoes in various dialects as follows:

(1) The insertion of *a* in the second syllable, giving λι̯*a* in the place of λι.

(2) The prefixing of σ to the first syllable, giving σκαλ for καλ. With this Bernhard Schmidt well compares the modern σκόνη for κόνις, and σκύφτω for κύπτω.

(3) The complete suppression of the second syllable, or the retention of the ι only as a faintly pronounced y.

(4) Combined with, and consequent upon, the suppression of the second syllable, the change of λ to ρ in the first syllable, or the interchange of the λ in the first syllable with the ρ in the fifth.

(5) The loss of either ν in the third syllable or τ in the fourth.

(6) The change of the *a* in the first syllable to *o*.

(7) The change of the *a* in the third syllable to ε, ι, ο, or

*ου*. Instances of this are most frequent in combination with the changes under (4).

(8) The interchange of the *κ* in the third syllable with the *τζ* (or *τσ*) in the fourth. The *νκ* thus produced becomes *γγ*.

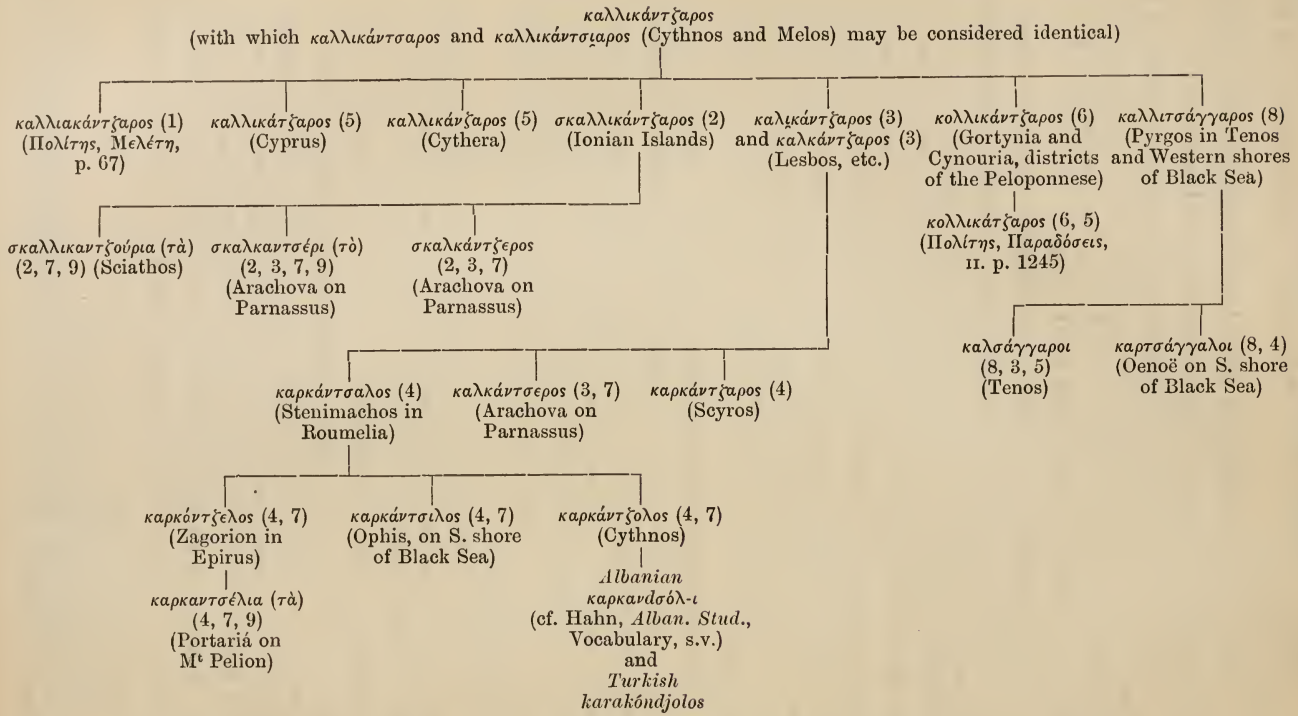
(9) The formation of diminutive neuter forms ending in *-ι* instead of the masculine forms in *-ος*, with the consequent shift of accent from the third to the fourth syllable, the *-ι* representing *-ιον*. These neuter forms occur chiefly in the plural.

Further it may be noted that the formation of the nominative plural of the masculine forms shows some variation; the ordinary form is in *-οι* with the accent on the antepenultimate as in the nominative singular; a second form has the same termination but with the accent shifted to the penultimate, as commonly happens in some dialects with words of the second declension (e.g. *ἄνθρωπος* with plural *ἀνθρώποι*) by assimilation to the other cases of the plural; while a third form has the anomalous termination *-αῖοι* (e.g. in Cephallenia, *σκαλλικάντσαρος* with plural *σκαλλικαντσαραῖοι*).

The following genealogical table exhibits the dialectic progeny of the normal form *καλλικάντζαρος*. The numeral or numerals placed against each form refer to the classification of phonetic changes as above. Beneath each form is noted the name of one place or district (though of course there are usually more) in which it may be heard, or, failing the *provenance*, the authority for its existence.

This table of dialectic forms, which was originally based mainly upon the information of Schmidt[1] and my own observations and has now been enlarged with the aid of Polites' new work[2], is even so probably far from complete; nor have I included in it, for reasons to be stated, the following forms: *καλκάνια*[3] (*τὰ*) which is apparently an abbreviated diminutive formed from the first two syllables of *καλκάν-τζαρος* with a neuter termination, and is therefore a nickname rather than a strict derivative: *καλκαγάροι* which Bent[4] represents to be the usual form in Naxos and Paros, but I hesitate to accept without confirmation from some other source:

[1] *Das Volksleben*, p. 143.
[2] *Παραδόσεις*, I. pp. 331–81, and II. pp. 1242–4.
[3] *Πολίτης*, *Παραδ.* II. 1257.
[4] *The Cyclades*, pp. 360 and 388. Bent does not seem to have known the ordinary form *καλλικάντζαροι*.


καλλικάντζαρος
(with which καλλικάντσαρος and καλλικάντσιαρος (Cythnos and Melos) may be considered identical)
καλλιακάντζαρος (1) (Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 67)
καλλικάτζαρος (5) (Cyprus)
καλλικάνζαρος (5) (Cythera)
σκαλλικάντζαρος (2) (Ionian Islands)
καλικάντζαρος (3) and καλκάντζαρος (3) (Lesbos, etc.)
κολλικάντζαρος (6) (Gortynia and Cynouria, districts of the Peloponnese)
καλλιτσάγγαρος (8) (Pyrgos in Tenos and Western shores of Black Sea)
κολλικάτζαρος (6, 5) (Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. p. 1245)
σκαλλικαντζούρια (τὰ) (2, 7, 9) (Sciathos)
σκαλκαντσέρι (τὸ) (2, 3, 7, 9) (Arachova on Parnassus)
σκαλκάντζερος (2, 3, 7) (Arachova on Parnassus)
καλσάγγαροι (8, 3, 5) (Tenos)
καρτσάγγαλοι (8, 4) (Oenoë on S. shore of Black Sea)
καρκάντσαλος (4) (Stenimachos in Roumelia)
καλκάντσερος (3, 7) (Arachova on Parnassus)
καρκάντζαρος (4) (Scyros)
καρκόντζελος (4, 7) (Zagorion in Epirus)
καρκάντσιλος (4, 7) (Ophis, on S. shore of Black Sea)
καρκάντζολος (4, 7) (Cythnos)
καρκαντσέλια (τὰ) (4, 7, 9) (Portariá on Mt Pelion)
*Albanian* καρκανdσόλ-ι (cf. Hahn, *Alban. Stud.*, Vocabulary, s.v.) and *Turkish karakóndjolos*

*σκατσάντζαροι*[1], a Macedonian form, and *καλκατζόνια*, a diminutive form from the district of Cynouria, both so extraordinarily corrupt that I can find no place for them in the table: *λυκοκάντζαροι*, which has been thought to be *κολλικάντζαρος* with the first two syllables reversed in order—a change to which I can find no parallel—but is, as I shall show later, a distinct and very important compound of the word *κάντζαρος*: and lastly *καλιοντζῆδες*[2] which has nothing at all to do with *καλλικάντζαροι* etymologically, but is an euphemistic and not particularly good pun upon it, really meaning the 'sailors of a galleon[3]' (Turkish *qāliondji*), and humorously substituted for the dreaded name of the Callicantzari.

To conclude this compilation, it must be added that the wives of Callicantzari are denoted by feminine forms with the termination *-ίνα* or *-οῦ*, and their children by neuter forms ending in *-άκι* or *-οῦδι* in place of the masculine *-ος*.

From a careful analysis of this material two main facts seem to emerge. First, the form *καλλικάντζαρος*, the commonest in use, is also the centre from which the other dialectic forms diverge in many directions; and therefore if one of the rarer dialectic forms be selected as the parent-form and the basis of any etymological explanation, the advocate of the particular etymology not only assumes the burden of showing how his original form came to be so generally superseded by the form *καλλικάντζαρος*, but also will require many more steps in his genealogical table of existing varieties of the word. Secondly, the words *καλλικάντζαρος* and *λυκοκάντζαρος* (if, as I hold, they cannot be connected through the mediation of the form *κολλικάντζαρος*) show that we have to deal with a compound word of which the second half is *κάντζαρος*: and corroboration of this view is afforded by the existence of a form of the uncompounded word in the dialect of Cynouria, where *σκατζάρια*[4] (*τὰ*)—i.e. a diminutive form of *κάντζαρος* with *σ* prefixed and *ν* lost—is used side by side with the words *καλλικάντζαροι* and *λυκοκάντζαροι* to denote the same beings.

In view of the latter inference, or perhaps even apart from it, there is no need to delay long over a derivation propounded by

[1] Abbott, *Maced. Folklore*, p. 73. [2] Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά, p. 209.

[3] In this, the ordinary, sense the word appears twice in Passow's *Popularia Carm.* nos. 142 and 200. See also his index, s.v. *καλιουντσήδαις*. The Turks themselves borrowed the word *qāliom* (our 'galleon') from the Franks.

[4] Πολίτης, Παραδ. II. pp. 1242 and 1244.

a Greek writer, Oeconomos, whose theory, that 'callicantzaros' is a corruption of the Latin 'caligatus' or perhaps of 'calcatura,' suggests a vision of a monster in hob-nailed boots which does more credit to its author's imagination than to his knowledge of philology.

A suggestion which deserves at any rate more serious consideration is that of Bernhard Schmidt[1] who holds that the word is of Turkish origin and passed first into Albanian and thence into Greek—reversing, that is, the steps indicated in the above table. But to this there are several objections, each weighty in itself, and cumulatively overwhelming.

First, if the Turkish word *karakondjolos* be the source from which the multitude of Greek forms, including in that case λυκοκάντζαρος[2], are derived, it ought to be shown how the Turkish word itself came to mean anything like 'were-wolf[3].' It is compounded, says Schmidt, of *kara*, 'black,' and *kondjolos* which is connected with *koundjul*, a word which means a 'slave of the lowest kind[4].' But before that derivation can be accepted, it should be shown what link in thought may exist between a slave even of the lowest and blackest variety and a were-wolf, and also how the supposed Turkish compound came to have the Greek termination -ος.

Secondly, the theory that the Greeks borrowed the word, and presumably also the notion which it expressed, from the Turks contravenes historical probability. For when did the supposed borrowing take place? Evidently not before the Ottoman influence had made itself thoroughly felt in Eastern Europe not only in war but in peace; for only those peoples who are living side by side in friendly, or at the least pacific, relations, are in a way to exchange views on the subject of were-wolves or any other superstitions; and in the case of the Greeks and the Turks such intercourse would certainly have been retarded by religious as well as racial animosity. Presumably then, even if the transference of the word from the Turkish to the Greek language had been direct and not, as Schmidt somewhat unnecessarily supposes,

[1] *Das Volksleben*, p. 144.
[2] Schmidt, it should be said, was dubious about the existence of this form.
[3] In Bianchi, *Dict. Turc-fr.* II. p. 469, it is translated 'loup-garou,' Schmidt, *l.c.*
[4] Schmidt, *l.c.* note 2, 'esclave de la plus mauvaise espèce.'

through the medium of Albanian, two or three generations must have elapsed after the Ottoman occupation of Chios in 1566[1], and the seventeenth century must have well begun, before the Greeks of that island even began to adopt the new word and the new superstition involved in it. Yet the form of the word familiar to Leo Allatius since the beginning of that century, when he lived as a boy in Chios, was not *karakondjolos* or anything like it, but *callicantzaros*; while the belief that children born in the octave of Christmas became Callicantzari was of such antiquity in Chios that a custom founded upon it had already come, as I have shown, to be misinterpreted. Indeed, as the same writer tells us, the Callicantzari and their haunts and habits were so familiar to the people of Chios that two proverbs of the island referred to them. One, which was addressed to persons always appearing in the same clothes—*βάλε τίποτε καινούριο ἀπάνω σου διὰ τοὺς καλλικαντζάρους*, 'put on something new because of the Callicantzari'—is more than a little obscure; it would seem to imply that the clothes which were being worn would hardly be worth the while even of the mischief-loving Callicantzari to tear; but in any case the very existence of an obscure proverb is evidence that the Callicantzaros and all his ways had long been a matter of common knowledge. The second saying—*ἐκατέβης ἀπὸ τὰ τριποτάματα*, 'You have come down from the Three Streams,' or in another version, *δὲν πᾶς 'στα τριποτάματα*; 'Why not go to the Three Streams?'—was addressed to mad persons, because, as Allatius explains, 'the Three Streams' was a wild wooded place in Chios reputed to be the haunt of Callicantzari. Historically then the theory that the people of Chios borrowed from the Turks the name and the conception of the Callicantzari is untenable.

Another piece of historical evidence against Schmidt's theory is that the Callicantzaros of the present day appears to be identical with the 'baboutzicarios' whereof Michael Psellus[2] discoursed in the eleventh century. He himself indeed, with his usual passion for explaining away popular superstitions, affirms that 'baboutzi-

[1] The previous relations between the Giustiniani, who controlled the Genoese chartered company in Chios, and the Ottoman Empire seem to have been purely commercial.

[2] Quoted by Leo Allat. *de quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. ix. and published in full by Σάθας.

carios' is the same as 'ephialtes,' the demon who punishes gluttony with nocturnal discomfort and a feeling of oppression; and in that view he was followed by Suidas[1] and other lexicographers; but he states two important points in the popular superstition which he combats: the 'baboutzicarios' appears only in the octave of Christmas; and it is at night that he meets and terrifies men. Moreover the name itself is, I suspect, derived from the Low-Latin *babuztus*[2] meaning 'mad,' and indicates the existence then of the belief which is so largely held to-day, that the monstrous apparitions of Christmastide are really men smitten with a peculiar kind of madness. Thus all the information which Psellus gives about the 'baboutzicarios' tallies with modern beliefs concerning the Callicantzaros, and militates against the supposition that the Greeks are indebted for this superstition to the Turks.

Finally there is positive evidence that the Turks borrowed the word in question from the Greeks; for the time at which they used to fear the advent of the *karakondjolos*—whether the superstition still remains the same, I do not know—was fixed not by their own calendar but by that of the Christians. An article written on the subject of the Turkish calendar early in last century contains this statement: 'The Turks have received this fabulous belief from the Greeks, and they say that this demon, whom the former call Kara Kondjolos and the latter Cali Cangheros, exercises his sway of maleficence and mischief from Christmas-day until that of the Epiphany[3].' Clearly the Turks would not have fixed the time for the appearance of the *karakondjolos* by the Christian festivals if they had not borrowed the whole superstition from the Greeks; and indeed the very termination in *-ος* of the Turkish form of the word betrays its Hellenic origin.

The proposed Turkish derivation of the word *καλλικάντζαρος* must therefore be rejected as finally as Oeconomos' Latin derivation, and it remains only to deal with those which treat the word as genuinely Greek.

[1] If this was the origin of Suidas' information, as seems almost certain in view of its inaccuracy, his date cannot be earlier than that of Psellus (flor. circa 1050).

[2] d'Arnis, *Lexicon Med. et Infim. Latin.*, explains *babuztus* (with other forms *babulus*, *baburrus*, and *baburcus*) by the words *stultus*, *insanus*.

[3] J. B. Navon, *Rouz Namé*, in the periodical *Fundgruben Orients*, Vienna, 1814, vol. IV. p. 146, quoted by Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. p. 1249, note 1.

The first of these is that proposed by Coraës[1], who made the word a compound of καλός and κάνθαρος. The formation, as might be expected of so great a scholar, is irreproachable; for the phonetic change of θ to τζ is seen in the development of the modern word καντζόχοιρος (a hedgehog) from the ancient ἀκανθόχοιρος. But the meaning obtained is less satisfactory. What has a 'good' or 'beautiful beetle' to do with a Callicantzaros such as I have described? The question remains without an answer. And yet some of Coraës' followers in recent times have thought triumphantly to vindicate his view by pointing out that in the dialect of Thessaly 'a species of large horned beetle' is known as καλλικάτζαροι. Now I am aware that elsewhere in Greece stag-beetles are called κατζαρίδες, which is undoubtedly a modern form of the ancient κάνθαρος and illustrates once more the phonetic change involved in Coraës' derivation; and I can believe that the Thessalian peasantry with a certain rustic humour sometimes call them καλλικάτζαροι instead. But what light does this throw on the supposed development of meaning? The view which these disciples of Coraës appear to hold, namely that the Callicantzari, who are known and feared throughout Greek lands and even beyond them in Turkey and in Albania, were called after an alleged Thessalian species of Coleoptera, would be fitly matched by a theory that the Devil was so named after a species of fish or a printer's assistant or a patent fire-lighter.

The same objection holds good as against Polites' first view[2]. Taking the word λυκοκάντζαρος as his starting-point, instead of the common and central form καλλικάντζαρος, he proposed to derive the word from λύκος, 'wolf,' and κάνθαρος, 'beetle.' But though the resulting hybrid might be a monster as hideous as the worst of Callicantzari, these creatures so far as I know show no traits suggestive of entomological parentage. But since Polites himself has long abandoned this view, there is no need to criticize it further.

His next pronouncement on the subject[3] banished both wolf and beetle and seemed to recognise the necessity of keeping the main form καλλικάντζαρος to the fore. But while he naturally

[1] Ἄτακτα, IV. p. 211.
[2] In the periodical Πανδώρα, 1866, XVI. p. 453.
[3] Μελέτη, p. 73, note 6.

assumed καλός to be the first half of the compound, he could only set down κάντζαρος as an unknown foreign, perhaps Slavonic, word.

But in his latest publication[1] he relinquishes this position and falls back once more on a dialectic form καλιτσάγγαρος which is reported to be in use at the village of Pyrgos in Tenos and at some places on the western shores of the Black Sea. This word he believes to be a compound, of which the second half is connected with a Byzantine word τσαγγίον, meaning a kind of boot, and the still existing, if somewhat rare, word, τσαγγάρης, 'a boot-maker,' while the first half is to be either καλός, 'fine,' or καλίκι, 'a hoof[2].' The former alternative provides easily the form καλοτσάγγαρος or, as would be almost more likely, καλλιτσάγγαρος, meaning 'one who wears fine boots'; while in the other alternative there results a supposed original form καλικοτσάγγαρος, meaning 'one who has hoofs instead of boots,' whence, by suppression of the third syllable, comes the existing word καλιτσάγγαρος, or again, by loss of the first syllable, a supposed form λικοτσάγγαρος which developed into λυκοκάντζαρος.

On the score of formation the former alternative is unassailable; but the latter, with its supposed loss of syllables, is more questionable. The loss of a first syllable is common enough in modern Greek, where it consists of a vowel only (e.g. βρίσκω[3] for εὑρίσκω, μέρα for ἡμέρα, etc.), but the supposed loss of the syllable κα would, I think, be hard to parallel. Again the loss of a syllable in the middle of a word is fairly common either through the suppression of the vowel ι (or η, which is not distinguished from ι in sound) as in καλκάντζαρος for καλλικάντζαρος, ἔρμος for ἔρημος, etc., or else when two concurrent syllables begin with the same consonant, as in ἀστροπελέκι, 'a thunderbolt,' for ἀστραποπελέκι, but the loss of the syllable κο from the form καλικοτσάγγαρος is a bold hypothesis.

But on the score of meaning both alternatives are alike

[1] Παραδόσεις, II. pp. 1252–3.

[2] The word καλίκι or καλίγι is a diminutive form from the Latin *caliga*. Besides its original meaning 'shoe,' it has acquired now the sense of 'hoof.' The transition was clearly through the sense of 'horse-shoe,' as witness the verb καλιγόνω, 'I shoe a horse.'

[3] This word has to be written with β to give the *v*-sound of υ following ε. The ε drops, and the υ cannot then be used alone, for except after α and ε it is sounded as a vowel.

unconvincing. Polites indeed cites one or two popular traditions in which the Callicantzari are represented as wearing wooden or iron shoes—wherewith no doubt the better to kick and to trample their victims; and such footgear might, I suppose, be described ironically as 'nice boots.' But to find in this occasional trait the origin of the word Callicantzaros[1] appears to me a counsel of despair. Nor does the other alternative commend itself to me any more. It is of course a widely accepted belief—and one by the way which contradicts the traditions just mentioned—that the Callicantzari have feet like those of an ass or a goat. But in describing such a creature no one surely would be likely to say that it had hoofs 'instead of boots'—'instead of feet' would be the natural and reasonable expression. To suppose that the Callicantzari (or rather, to use the hypothetical form, the καλικοτσάγγαροι) are so named because their boot-maker provides them with hoofs instead of detachable foot-gear, is little short of ludicrous.

But though neither of the proposed derivations will, I think, win much acceptance, the historical evidence which Polites adduces in support of his views forms a valuable contribution to the study of this subject. The inferences which he draws therefrom may not be correct; but the material which he has collected is of high interest.

Singling out of the many traditions concerning the Callicantzari the widely, and perhaps universally, prevalent belief that their activities are confined to the Twelve Days between Christmas and Epiphany, he argues that if we can discover the origin of this limitation, we shall be in a fair way to discover also whence came the conception of the Callicantzari themselves.

Accordingly he traces the history of winter festivals in Greece, starting from the period in which the Greeks, in deference to their Roman masters, adopted the festivals known as the Saturnalia, the Brumalia, and the Kalándae (for so the celebration of the Kalends of January was called by the Greeks) in place of their own old festivals such as the Kronia and some of the festivals of Dionysus. The change however was more one of name than of

[1] Polites backs up this meaning by deriving *baboutzicarios* (on which see above, p. 217) from παπούτσι (Arabic *bābouch*) 'a shoe,' but reluctantly refuses to accept the identification of καλιοντζῆς (above, p. 215) with γαλόντζης, a maker of γαλόντσας or 'wooden shoes.' Παραδ. II. 1253.

method of observance[1]. The pagan orgies which marked these festal days were strongly denounced by the Fathers of the Church from the very earliest times. In the first century of our era, Timothy, bishop of Ephesus, met with his martyrdom in an attempt to suppress such a festival. At the end of the fourth century S. John Chrysostom and, after him, Asterios, bishop of Amasea, loudly inveighed against the celebration of the Kalandae. At the end of the seventh century the sixth Oecumenical Council of the Church promulgated a canon forbidding all these pagan winter-festivals. But still in the twelfth century, as Balsamon testifies[2], the old abuses continued unabated; and there are local survivals of such festivals at the present day.

The most prominent feature of these celebrations was that men dressed themselves up in various characters, to represent women, soldiers, or animals, and thus disguised gave themselves up to the wildest orgies. At Ephesus it is clear that these orgies included human sacrifice, and that Bishop Timothy was on one occasion the victim; for we are told by Photius that he met with his death in trying to suppress 'the polluted and blood-stained rites of the Greeks[3]'; and the same writer speaks of *τὸ καταγώγιον*—so this particular ceremony was called—as a 'devilish and abominable festival[4]' in which men 'took delight in unholy things as if they were pious deeds[5].' And again another account of the same celebration tells how men with masks on their faces and with clubs in their hands went about 'assaulting without restraint free men and respectable women, perpetrating murders of no common sort and shedding endless blood in the best parts of the city, as if they were performing a religious duty (*ὡσανεὶ ἀναγκαῖόν τι καὶ ψυχωφελὲς πράττοντες*)[6].'

At Amasea, according to Asterios, at the beginning of the fifth century, things were not much better. The peasants, he says, who come into the town during the festival 'are beaten and outraged by drunken revellers, they are robbed of anything they are carrying, they have war waged upon them in a time of peace,

[1] Their Greek character is strongly emphasized by Balsamon, pp. 230–1. (Vol. 137 of Migne, *Patrol. Gr.-Lat.*)

[2] *loc. cit.*

[3] Photius, *Biblioth.* 254, pp. 468–9, ed. Bekker, *μυσαρὰς καὶ μιαιφόνους τελετάς.*

[4] *Ibid.* *δαιμονιώδης καὶ βδελυκτὴ ἑορτή.*

[5] *Ibid.* *ὡς ἐνθέσμοις ἔργοις τοῖς ἀθεμίτοις καλλωπιζόμενοι.*

[6] Usener, *Acta S. Timothei*, p. 11 (Bonn).

they are mocked and insulted in word and in deed[1].' Here too the custom of dressing up was in vogue among those who took part in the festival—women's dress being especially affected.

Again in the seventh century the points specially emphasized by the canon of the Church are that 'no man is to put on feminine dress, nor any woman the dress proper to men, nor yet are masks, whether comic, satyric, or tragic, to be worn'; and the penalty for disregard of this ordinance was to be excommunication. Yet for all these fulminations the old custom continued. The author of 'the Martyrdom of S. Dasius[2],' writing perhaps as late as the tenth century, speaks of the festival of the Kronia as still observed in the old way: 'on the Kalends of January foolish men, following the custom of the (pagan) Greeks, though they call themselves Christians, hold a great procession, changing their own appearance and character, and assuming the guise of the devil; clothed in goat-skins and with their faces disguised,' they reject their baptismal vows and again serve in the devil's ranks. And still in the twelfth century these practices obtained not only among the laity but even among the clergy, some of whom, in the words of Balsamon[3], 'assume various masks and dresses, and appear in the open nave of the church, sometimes with swords girt on and in military uniform, other times as monks or even as quadrupeds.'

Several instances of the continuance of this custom in modern times have been collected by Polites[4] and others; the savage orgies of old time have indeed dwindled into harmless mummery; but their most constant feature, the wearing of strange disguises, remains unchanged; and the occasion too is still a winter-festival, either some part of the Twelve Days or the carnival preceding Lent. From certain facts concerning these modern festivals it will be manifest that some relation exists between the mummers who celebrate them and the Callicantzari.

In Crete, where the New Year is thus celebrated, the mummers are called *καμπουχέροι*, while in Achaia a fuller form of the same word, *κατσιμπουχέροι*, is a by-name of the Callicantzari.

[1] Migne, *Patrol. Gr.-Lat.* Vol. 40, p. 220.
[2] Edited by Cumont.
[3] Balsamon, *loc. cit.*
[4] Παραδόσεις, II. pp. 1273–4. To this work I am indebted for most of my instances of these celebrations during the 'Twelve Days.'

At Portariá on Mount Pelion, each night of the Twelve Days, a man is dressed up as an 'Arab,' wearing an old cloak and having bells affixed to his clothes. He goes the round of the streets with a lantern; and the villagers explicitly state that this is done *γιὰ τὰ καρκαντζέλια*, 'because of the Callicantzari,' i.e., says Polites, as a means of getting rid of them. At Pharsala there is a sort of play at the Epiphany, in which the mummers represent bride, bridegroom, and 'Arab'; the Arab tries to carry off the bride, and the bridegroom defends her. In some parts of Macedonia similar mumming takes place at the New Year; in Belbentós the men who take part in it are called 'Arabs'; at Palaeogratsana they have the name *ρουκατζιάρια* (evidently another compound of *κάντζαρος*, but one which I cannot interpret); formerly also 'at Kozane and in many other parts of Greece,' according to a Greek writer in the early part of the nineteenth century, throughout the Twelve Days boys carrying bells used to go round the houses, singing songs and having 'one or more of their company dressed up with masks and bells and foxes' brushes and other such things to give them a weird and monstrous look.'

This custom is evidently identical with one which I myself saw enacted in Scyros at the carnival preceding Lent. The young men of the town array themselves in huge capes made of goat-skin, reaching to the hips or lower, and provided with holes for the arms. These capes are sometimes made with hoods of the same material which cover the whole head and face, small holes being cut for the eyes but none for purposes of respiration. In other cases the cape covers the shoulders only, leaving the head free, and the young man contents himself with the blue and white kerchief, which is the usual head-gear in Scyros, and a roughly made domino. A third variety of cape is provided with a hood to cover the back of the head, while the mask for the face is made of the skin of some small animal such as a weasel, of which the hind legs and tail are attached to the hood, while the head and forelegs hang down to the breast of the wearer; eye-holes are cut in these as in the other forms of mask. These capes are girt tightly about the waist with a stout cord or strap, from which are hung all round the body a large number of bronze goat-bells, of the ordinary shape but of extraordinary dimensions, some measuring as much as ten inches for the greatest

diameter. The method by which these bells are attached to the belt is remarkable, and is designed to permit a large number of them to be worn without being in any way muffled by contact with the cape. Each bell is fastened to one end of a curved and springy stick of about a foot in length, and the other end is inserted behind the belt from above; the curve and elasticity of the stick thus cause the bell to hang at some few inches distance from the body, free to jangle with every motion of the dancer. Some sixty or seventy of these bells, of various sizes, are worn by the best-equipped, and the weight of such a number was estimated by the people of the place as approximately a hundredweight—no easy load with which to dance over the narrow, roughly-paved alleys of 'steep Scyros.' Those however who lack either the prowess or the accoutrements to share in the glorious fatigue do not abstain altogether from the festivities; even the small boys beg, borrow, or steal a goat-bell and attach it to the hinder part of their person in lieu of a tail, or, at the worst, make good the caudal deficiency with a branch from the nearest tree.

Thus in various grades of goat-like attire the young men and boys traverse the town, stopping here and there, where the steep and tortuous paths offer a wider and more level space, to leap and dance, or anon at some friendly door to imbibe spirituous encouragement to further efforts. In the dancing itself there is nothing peculiar to this festival; the swinging amble, which is the gait of the more heavily equipped, is prescribed by the burden of bells and the roughness of roads. The purpose of the leaping and dancing is solely to evoke as much din as possible from the bells: and prodigious indeed is the jarring and jangling in those narrow alleys when the troupe of dancers leap together into the air, as high as their burdens allow, and come down with one crash.

Since I first published[1] an account of these festivities in Scyros, similar celebrations of carnival-time have been reported from other places; at Sochos in Macedonia[2] the scene is almost identical with that which I have described; in the district of Viza in Thrace a primitive dramatic performance was recently observed in which the two chief actors wore similar goat-skins, masks, and

[1] *Annual of the British School at Athens*, VI. p. 125.
[2] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 31.

bells, and had their hands blackened[1]; and again at Kostí in the extreme north of Thrace there is mummery of the same kind[2].

A scene of the same sort was formerly enacted in Athens also during the carnival, and was known by the expressive name *τὰ ταράματα* (i.e. *ταράγματα*), 'The Riotings.' A man dressed up as a bear used to rush through the streets followed by a crowd of youths howling and clashing any noisy instruments that came to hand. That this ceremony was originally of a religious character is shown not only by its association with the season of Lent, but by an accessory rite performed on the same occasion. Wooden statues, actually called *ξόανα* as late as the time of the Greek War of Independence, were carried out in procession; and the well-being of the people was believed to be so bound up with the due performance of these rites, that even during the Revolution, when Athens was in the hands of the Turks, a native of the place is said to have returned from Aegina, whither he had fled for safety, in order to play the part of the bear and to carry out the *xoana* for the general good[3].

The close connexion of these several modern customs, whether the occasion of them is the Twelve Days or Carnival-time, cannot be doubted. The variation of date is of old standing; for the canon of the Church, on which Balsamon[4] comments, condemns certain pagan festivals on March 1st (approximately the carnival time) along with the *Kalandae* and *Brumalia*; and the similarity of the dresses, masks, bells, and other accoutrements proper to both occasions proves the substantial identity of the festivals.

A comparison of these allied modern customs can only lead to one conclusion. The use of the same word to denote the mummers in Crete and the Callicantzari in Achaia; the name *ῥουκατζιάρια* for these mummers at Palaeogratsana; the custom of blackening the face, which is clearly indicated by the employment of the name 'Arab' in this connexion; the monstrous and half-animal appearance produced by masks, foxes' brushes, goat-skins, and suchlike adornments; the attempted rape of the bride by the

[1] R. M. Dawkins, in *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. 26, Part II. (1906), p. 193.

[2] Dawkins, *op. cit.* p. 201, referring to a pamphlet, *περὶ τῶν ἀναστεναρίων καὶ ἄλλων τινῶν παραδόξων ἐθίμων καὶ προλήψεων, ὑπὸ* 'A. Χουρμουρζιάδου, Constantinople, 1873, p. 22.

[3] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. *τῶν* Ἀθ. III. p. 162.

[4] *loc. cit.*

'Arab' in the play at Pharsala—all furnish contributory evidence that the mummers themselves represent Callicantzari. Only at Portariá is the significance of the custom somewhat confused; there the 'Arab' in his old cloak and bells has long ceased to represent a Callicantzaros, and has actually been provided with a lantern with which to scare the Callicantzari away.

The mummers then represent Callicantzari; the question which remains to be answered is whether the mumming was the cause or the effect of the belief in Callicantzari.

Polites, in support of his theory that the name Callicantzari, in its earliest form, meant either 'wearers of nice boots' or 'possessors of hoofs instead of boots,' claims that the mummers first suggested to the Greek imagination the conception of the Callicantzari (it is not indeed anywhere mentioned in the above traditions that the feet or the footgear of the mummers were in any way remarkable, but we may let that pass), and that the fear which their riotous conduct inspired in earlier times gradually elevated them in men's minds to the rank of demons. This, he urges, is the reason why these demons are feared only during the Twelve Days, the period when such mumming was in vogue.

In confirmation of his view Polites cites some of the evidence concerning the human origin of the Callicantzari, mentioning both the fairly common belief that men turn into Callicantzari, and the rarer traditions that a Callicantzaros resumes his human shape if a torch be thrust in his face and that the transformation of men into Callicantzari can be prevented by certain means. With this evidence I have already dealt, and I agree with Polites that in it there survives a genuine record of the human origin of the Callicantzari. But of course on the further question, whether the particular men thus elevated to the dignity of demons were the mummers of Christmastide, it has no immediate bearing.

As a second piece of corroboration, he adduces another derivation hardly more felicitous than those with which I have already dealt. The word on which he tries his hand this time is *καμπουχέροι* or *κατσιμπουχέροι*—the name of the mummers in Crete and of the Callicantzari in Achaia. Here again, with a certain perversity, he selects the worse form of the two, *καμπουχέροι*, which is evidently a syncopated form of the other, and proceeds to derive it from the Spanish *gambujo*, 'a mask,' leaving the subsequent development

of κατσιμπουχέροι totally inexplicable. For my own part I consider it far more probable that the word κατσιμπουχέροι is a humorously compounded name, of which the second half is the word μπουχαρί[1] (an Arabic word which has passed, probably through Turkish, into Greek) meaning 'chimney,' and that the whole by-name has reference simply to the common belief that Callicantzari try to extinguish the fire on the hearth and thus to gain access to the house by the chimney. As to the meaning of κατσι-, the first half of the compound, I can only hazard the conjecture that it is connected with the verb κατσιάζω, which ordinarily means to blight, to wither, to dry up, and so forth, though its passive participle, κατσιασμένος, is said by Skarlatos[2] to be applied to clothes which are 'difficult to wash.' If then the compound κατσιμπουχέροι is a descriptive title of the Callicantzari, meaning those who render the chimney difficult to wash, the coarse and eminently rustic humour of the allusion to their habits needs no further explanation; and it is the mummers of Crete who owe their name to the Callicantzari, not *vice versa*.

While therefore I acknowledge and appreciate to the full the value of Polites' researches into the history of the Twelve Days, the inferences which he draws from the material collected seem to me no more sound than the derivations which they are designed to corroborate. My own interpretation of the historical facts which Polites has brought together is as follows.

The superstitions and customs connected by the modern folk with the Twelve Days are undoubtedly an inheritance from ancestors who celebrated the Brumalia and other pagan festivals at the same season of the year. These ancient festivals, though Roman in name, probably differed very little in the manner of their observance from certain old Greek festivals, chief among which was some festival of Dionysus. This is rendered probable both by the date of these festivals and by the manner of their celebration. For the worship of Dionysus was practically confined to the wintertime; at Delphi his cult superseded that of Apollo during the three

[1] The word is certainly in my experience rare, and is not given in Skarlatos' Lexicon. But it occurs e.g. in a popular tradition from Thessaly concerning the Callicantzari, in Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 356.

[2] Λεξικὸν τῆς καθ' ἡμᾶς Ἑλληνικῆς διαλέκτου, s.v. κατσιασμένος.

winter months[1]; and at Athens the four festivals of Dionysus fell within about the same period—the rural Dionysia at the end of November or beginning of December, the Lenaea about a month later, the Anthesteria at the end of January, and the Great Dionysia at the end of February. As for the manner of conducting the Latin-named festivals, Asterios' description of the Kalándae in the fifth century plainly attests the Dionysiac character of the orgies, and Balsamon, in the twelfth, was so convinced, from what he himself witnessed, of their Bacchanalian origin, that he actually proposed to derive the name *Brumalia* from Βροῦμος[2] (by which he meant Βρόμιος) a surname of Dionysus.

The mumming then, which is still customary in some parts of Greece during the Twelve Days, is a survival apparently of festivals in honour of Dionysus. Further the mummers dress themselves up to resemble Callicantzari. But the worship of Dionysus presented a similar scene; 'those who made processions in honour of Dionysus,' says Ulpian, 'used to dress themselves up for that purpose to resemble his companions, some in the guise of Satyrs, others as Bacchae, and others as Sileni[3].' The mummers therefore of the present day have, it appears, inherited the custom of dressing up from the ancient worshippers of Dionysus and are their modern representatives; and from this it follows that the Callicantzari whom the modern mummers strive to resemble are to be identified with those motley companions of Dionysus whom his worshippers imitated of old.

The more closely these two identifications are examined, the more certain they will appear. Take for example Müller's general description[4] of the celebration of Dionysus' festivals. 'The swarm of subordinate beings—Satyrs, Panes, and Nymphs—by whom Bacchus was surrounded, and through whom life seemed to pass from the god of outward nature into vegetation and the animal world, and branch off into a variety of beautiful or grotesque forms, were ever present to the fancy of the Greeks; it was not necessary to depart very widely from the ordinary course of ideas, to imagine that dances of fair nymphs and bold satyrs,

[1] Plutarch, *de εἰ apud Delphos*, 9 (p. 389).
[2] Balsamon, p. 231 (Migne, *Patrol. Gr.-Lat.* Vol. 137).
[3] Ulpian, *ad Dem.* p. 294. Cf. also Balsamon, *loc. cit.*
[4] Müller and Donaldson, *History of the Literature of Ancient Greece*, I. p. 382.

among the solitary woods and rocks, were visible to human eyes, or even in fancy to take a part in them. The intense desire felt by every worshipper of Bacchus to fight, to conquer, to suffer, in common with him, made them regard these subordinate beings as a convenient step by which they could approach more nearly to the presence of their divinity. The custom, so prevalent at the festivals of Bacchus, of taking the disguise of satyrs, doubtless originated in this feeling, and not in the mere desire of concealing excesses under the disguise of a mask; otherwise, so serious and pathetic a spectacle as tragedy could never have originated in the choruses of these satyrs. The desire of escaping from *self* into something new and strange, of living in an imaginary world, breaks forth in a thousand instances in these festivals of Bacchus. It is seen in the colouring the body with plaster, soot, vermilion, and different sorts of green and red juices of plants, wearing goats' and deer skins round the loins, covering the face with large leaves of different plants; and lastly in the wearing masks of wood, bark, and other materials, and of a complete costume belonging to the character.' To complete this description it may be added that 'drunkenness, and the boisterous music of flutes, cymbals and drums, were likewise common to all Dionysiac festivals[1].' Which of all these things is missing in the mediaeval or modern counterpart of the festival? The blackening of the face or the wearing of the masks, the feminine costume or beast-like disguise, the boisterous music of bells, the rioting and drunkenness—all are reproduced in the celebration of Kalandae and Brumalia or in the mumming of the Twelve Days. The mummers are the worshippers of a god, whose name however and existence they and their forefathers have long forgotten.

And again are not the Callicantzari faithful reproductions of the Satyrs and Sileni who ever attended Dionysus? Their semi-bestial form with legs of goat or ass affixed to a human trunk, their grotesque faces and goat-like ears and horns, their boisterous and mischievous merriment, their love of wine, their passion for dancing, above all in company with Nereids, the indecency of their actions and sometimes of their appearance, their wantonness and lust—all these widely acknowledged attributes of the Calli-

[1] Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, s.v. *Dionysia*.

cantzari proclaim them lineal descendants of Dionysus' motley comrades.

Such is my interpretation of the facts collected by Polites, and it differs from that which he has advanced in the reversal of cause and effect. Starting from the fact that dressing up in various disguises was the chief characteristic of the Kalandae and Brumalia and is perpetuated in the mumming of the Twelve Days, but failing to carry his researches far enough back and so to discover the absolute identity of these festivals with the ancient Dionysia, he holds that the generally prevalent custom of dressing up in monstrous and horrible disguises at a given period of the year—a custom which he leaves unexplained—was the cause of the belief in the activity of monstrous and horrible demons at that period; those who had once been simply human mummers were exalted to the ranks of the supernatural, but still betrayed their origin by the possession of a name which meant either 'wearers of nice boots' or else 'hoofed and not booted.' In my view on the contrary the identity of the modern mumming with the ancient Dionysia is indisputable; and just as in ancient times the belief in the Satyrs and Sileni was the cause of the adoption of satyr-like disguises in the Dionysia, so in more recent times, when the Satyrs, Sileni, and others came to be included in the more comprehensive term Callicantzari, it was the belief in the Callicantzari which continued to cause the wearing of similar disguises during the Twelve Days.

And this interpretation of the facts explains no less adequately than that of Polites the reason why the activities of the Callicantzari are limited to the Twelve Days. That which was in ancient times the special season for the commemoration of Dionysus and his attendants has now with the very gradual but still real decline of ancient beliefs become the only season. This is natural and intelligible enough in itself; but, if a parallel be required, Greek folklore can provide one. No one will suppose that the Dryads of ancient Greece were feared during the first six days of August only, though it is likely enough that they had a special festival at that time; but in modern folklore these are the only days on which, in many parts of Greece, any survival of the Dryads' memory can be found[1].

[1] See above, p. 151.

Moreover the identification of the Callicantzari with the Satyrs and other kindred comrades of Dionysus elucidates a modern custom which I noticed earlier in this chapter but did not then explain—the rare, but known, custom of making offerings to the Callicantzari. The sweetmeats, waffles, sausages, and even the pig's bone which are occasionally placed in the chimney for the Callicantzari correspond, it would seem, with offerings formerly made to Dionysus and shared by his train of Satyrs. Possibly even the choice of pork (usually in the shape of sausages) or, in the more rudimentary form of the survival, of a pig's bone, dates from the age in which the proper victim for Dionysus at the Anthesteria was a sow; but of course it may only have been determined by the fact that pork is the peasant's Christmas fare and therefore the most ready offering at that season.

How then, it will be asked, does the conclusion here reached, namely that the Callicantzari are, in many districts, the modern representatives of the Satyrs and other kindred beings, square with that other conclusion previously drawn from another set of facts, namely that the Callicantzari were originally not demons but men who either voluntarily or under the compulsion of a kind of madness assumed the shape and the character of beasts? The reconciliation of these two apparently antagonistic conclusions depends primarily on the derivation of the name Callicantzari.

Now the conditions which in my opinion that derivation should satisfy, have already been indicated in my discussion of dialectic forms and in my criticism of the several derivations proposed by others; but it will be well to summarise them here. They are four in number.

First, the derivation of this word, as of all others, must involve only such phonetic changes as find parallels in other words of the language.

Secondly, it must recognise the commonest form *καλλικάντζαρος* as being also the central and original form from which the many dialectic forms in the above table have diverged.

Thirdly, it must explain this form as a compound of a word *κάντζαρος*—presumably with *καλός*. For, in dialect, there exists a word *σκατζάρι*, which is used as a synonym with *καλλικάντζαρος* and is evidently in form a diminutive of the word

κάντζαρος, and likewise there exists another synonym λυκοκάντζαρος, which cannot be formed from καλλικάντζαρος by an arbitrary shuffling of syllables but is a separate compound of κάντζαρος—presumably with λύκος.

Fourthly, and consequently on the last-named condition, the word κάντζαρος, whether alone or in composition with either καλός or λύκος, must possess a meaning adequate to denote the monsters who have been described.

All these conditions are satisfied in the identification of the word κάντζαρος with the ancient word κένταυρος.

The phonetic change herein involved will, to any who are not familiar with the pronunciation of modern Greek, appear more considerable than it really is. In that pronunciation it must be remembered that the accent, which indicates the syllable on which stress is laid, is everything, and ancient quantity is nothing; and further that the ancient diphthongs *au* and *eu* have come to be pronounced respectively as *av* or *af* and *ev* or *ef*. The change of sound in this case may therefore be fairly measured by the difference between kéndăvrŏs and kándzărŏs in British pronunciation[1]. The phonetic modifications therefore which require notice are the substitution of α for ε in the first syllable, the introduction of a ζ after the τ, and the loss of the *v*-sound before the ρ.

The change from ε to α is very common in Greek, especially (by assimilation it would seem) where the following syllable, as in the word before us, has an α for its vowel. Thus ἀλαφρός is constantly to be heard instead of ἐλαφρός (light), ἀργαλειός for ἐργαλειός (a loom), ματα- for μετα- in compound verbs. The insertion of ζ (or σ) after τ is certainly a less common change, but parallels can be found for this also. The ancient word τέττιγες (grasshoppers) appears in modern Greek as τζίτζικες. A word of Latin origin[2] τεντόνω (I stretch) has an equally common by-form τσιτόνω. The classical word τύκανον (a chisel) has passed, through a diminutive form τυκάνιον, into the modern τσουκάνι. The word κεντήματα (embroideries) has a dialectic form κεντζήματα[3]. From the adjective μουντός (grey, brown, dusky) are

[1] I write *d* in the place of the Greek τ, which when following ν always has the sound of English *d*.

[2] It is probably formed from τέντα, 'a tent,' which clearly comes from the Latin. Some however derive directly from the anc. Gk τιταίνω. The question of origin however does not affect my illustration of the later change of τ into τσ.

[3] Heard in Sciathos and kindly communicated to me by Mr A. J. B. Wace.

formed substantives *μουντζοῦρα* and *μουντζαλιά* (a stain or daub). The substantive *κατσοῦφα* (sulkiness, sullenness) is probably to be identified with the ancient *κατήφεια*. The two most frequently employed equivalents for 'mad' or 'crazy'—*τρελλός* and *ζουρλός*—are probably of kindred origin—an insertion of *ζ* in the former having produced first *τζερλός* and thence *(τ)ζουρλός*. Finally there is some likelihood that the word *κάντζαρος*, in a botanical sense in which it is now used, is to be identified with the ancient plant-name *κενταυρεῖον* or *κενταύριον*. The former indeed now denotes a kind of juniper, while the later is of course our 'centaury'; but this difference in meaning is not, I think, fatal to the identification of the words. At the present day the common-folk are extraordinarily vague in their nomenclature of natural objects. In travelling about I made a practice of asking my guides and others the names of flowers and birds and suchlike; and my general experience might fairly be summed up by saying that the average peasant divides all birds which he does not eat into two classes; the larger ones are hawks, and the smaller are—'little birds, God knows what'; and an accompanying shrug of the shoulders indicates that the man does not care; while most flowers can be called either violets or gilly-flowers at pleasure. Even therefore when a peasant of superior intelligence knows that *κάντζαρος* is now the name of a kind of juniper, it does not follow that that name has always belonged to it, and has not been transferred to it from some plant formerly used, let us say, for a like purpose. In this case it is known that both juniper and some kind of centaury were formerly used for medicating wine[1], and the wine treated with either was prescribed as 'good for the stomach[2].' Hence a confusion of the two plants is intelligible enough among a peasantry not distinguished by a love of botanical accuracy. But I place no reliance upon this possible identification; the cases previously cited furnish sufficient analogies.

Further it may be noted that in the first two examples of this insertion of *ζ* or *σ* a certain change in the consonants of the next syllable accompanies it. The *γ* in *τέττιγες* becomes *κ*, the *ντ* in *τεντόνω* is reduced to *τ*. In the same way, it seems, when *ζ* was

[1] Pliny, *Nat. Hist.* xxv. 6; Dioscor. v. 45; Sophocles Byzant. *Lexicon*, s.v. *ἀρκεύθινος οἶνος*.

[2] Marcellus Empir., cap. 20 (p. 139).

inserted after the τ of κένταυρος, the sound of *vr* was reduced to *r* only, though certainly the loss of the *v*-sound might have occurred, apart from any such predisposing modification, as in the common word ξέρω (I know) for ἠξεύρω.

Since then the etymological conditions of the problem are satisfied by the identification of the word κάντζαρος with the ancient κένταυρος, it remains only to show that the name of 'Centaurs' fitly belongs to the monsters whom I have described; and my contention will be that the simple word κάντζαρος, 'Centaur,' surviving now only in the dialectic diminutive form σκατζάρι, adequately expresses every sort and condition of Callicantzaros that has been depicted; that καλλικάντζαρος, the general word, of which so many dialectic varieties occur, being simply an euphemistic compound of κάντζαρος with καλός such as we have previously seen in the title καλλικυρᾶδες given to the Nereids, expresses precisely the same meaning as the simple word κάντζαρος, 'Centaur'; and that λυκοκάντζαρος originally denoted one species only of the genus Centaur, namely a Callicantzaros whose animal traits were those of a wolf.

What then did the ancients mean by the word 'centaur'?

The mention of the name is apt to carry away our minds to famous frieze or pediment, where in one splendidly impossible creation of art the excellences of man, his head and his hands, are wed with the horse's strength and speed. This was the species of Centaur which the great sculptors and painters in the best period of Greek Art chose to depict, and these among educated men became the Centaurs *par excellence.* Yet even so it was not forgotten that they formed only one species, and were strictly to be called ἱπποκένταυροι, 'horse-centaurs.' Moreover two other species of Centaur are named in the ancient language, ἰχθυοκένταυροι or fish-centaurs, and ὀνοκένταυροι or ass-centaurs. Of the former nothing seems to be known beyond the mere name, but this matters little inasmuch as they can assuredly have contributed nothing to the popular conception of the wholly terrestrial Callicantzari. The ass-centaurs will prove of more interest.

But the list of ancient species of Centaur does not really stop here. No other compounds of the word Centaur may exist, but none the less there were other Centaurs—other creatures, that

is, of mixed human and animal form. Chief among these were the Satyrs, who as pourtrayed by early Greek art might equally well have been called 'hippocentaurs,' and in the presentations of Greco-Roman art deserved the name, if I may coin it, of 'tragocentaurs.' And the Greeks themselves recognised this fact. 'The evidence of the coins of Macedonia,' says Miss Jane Harrison[1], 'is instructive. On the coins of Orreskii, a centaur, a horse-man, bears off a woman in his arms. At Lete close at hand, with a coinage closely resembling in style, fabric, weight the money of the Orreskii and other Pangaean tribes, the type is the same in *content*, though with an instructive difference of form—a naked Satyr or Seilenos with the hooves, ears and tail of a horse seizes a woman round the waist....This interchange of types, Satyr and Centaur, is evidence about which there can be no mistake. Satyr and Centaur, slightly diverse types of the horse-man, are in essence one and the same.' Nor was the recognition of this fact confined to Macedonia. A famous picture by Zeuxis, representing the domestic life of Centaurs, with a female Centaur (a creature about as rare as a female Callicantzaros) suckling her young, pourtrayed her in most respects, apart from her sex, conventionally, but gave her the ears of a Satyr[2]. And reversely Nonnus ventured to describe the 'shaggy Satyrs' as being, 'by blood, of Centaur-stock[3].' In view then of this close bond between the two types of half-human half-animal creatures, it would be natural that, when the specific name Satyr was lost, as it has been lost, from the popular language, while the generic term Centaur survived in the form Callicantzaros, the Satyrs should have been amalgamated with those who from of old had professed and called themselves Centaurs; and with the Satyrs, I suppose, went also the Sileni.

Thus the word Centaur, in spite of the narrowing tendencies of Greek art which selected the hippocentaur as the ideal type, was always comprehensive in popular use, and perhaps became even wider in scope as time went on and the distinctive appellations of Satyrs and suchlike were forgotten; but it is also possible that from the very earliest times the distinction between

[1] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 380.

[2] Lucian, *Zeuxis*, cap. 6.

[3] Nonnus, *Dionys.* 13. 44 καὶ λασίων Σατύρων, Κενταυρίδος αἷμα γενέθλης. This reference I owe to Miss Harrison, *l. c.*

Satyrs and Centaurs was merely an artistic and literary convention, and that in popular speech the name Centaur was applied to both without discrimination. But it does not really concern us to argue at length the question whether the common-folk in antiquity never distinguished, or, having once distinguished, subsequently confused the Satyrs and the Centaurs. It is just worth noticing that it was in art of the Greco-Roman period, so far as I can discover, that horse-centaurs first began to be represented along with Satyrs and Sileni in the *entourage* of Dionysus; and if this addition to the conventional treatment of such scenes was made, as seems likely, in deference to popular beliefs, the date by which the close association of the two classes was an accomplished fact and confusion of them therefore likely to ensue is approximately determined.

At some date therefore probably not later than the beginning of our era, the generic name of Centaur comprised several species of half-human, half-animal monsters, of whom the best known were horse-centaurs, ass-centaurs, Satyrs, and Sileni; and each of these species, it will be seen, has contributed something to one or other of the many types of the modern Centaurs, the Callicantzari.

The horse-centaur, which was the favourite species among the artists of ancient times, has curiously enough had least influence upon the modern delineation of Callicantzari. The only attribute which they seem to have received chiefly from this source is the rough shaggy hair with which they are usually said to be covered; 'shaggy' is Homer's epithet for the Centaurs[1], and the hippocentaurs of later art retained the trait; for it is specially noted by Lucian that in Zeuxis' picture the male hippocentaur was shaggy all over, the human part of him no less than the equine[2].

The ass-centaur on the contrary is rarely mentioned by ancient writers, but has contributed largely to some presentments of the Callicantzari. Aelian mentions the name, in the feminine form *ὀνοκενταύρα*, but the monster to which he applies it, although true to its name in that the upper part of its body is human and the lower part asinine, is not a creation of superstitious fancy, but, as is evident from other facts which he mentions, some species of

[1] *Iliad*, II. 743.
[2] Lucian, *Zeuxis*, cap. 5.

ape known to him, none too accurately, from some traveller's tale. The *locus classicus* on the subject of genuine supernatural ass-centaurs is a passage in the Septuagint translation of Isaiah[1]: *καὶ συναντήσουσιν δαιμόνια ὀνοκενταύροις καὶ βοηθήσονται ἕτερος πρὸς τὸν ἕτερον, ἐκεῖ ἀναπαύσονται ὀνοκένταυροι εὑρόντες αὑτοῖς ἀνάπαυσιν*—'And demons shall meet with ass-centaurs and they shall bring help one to another; there shall ass-centaurs find rest for themselves and be at rest.' Here our Revised Version runs:—"The wild beasts of the desert shall meet with the wolves (*Heb.* 'howling creatures'), and the satyr shall cry to his fellow; yea, the night-monster shall settle there." The comparison is instructive. It is clear from the context that the Septuagint translators were minded to give some Greek colouring to their rendering even at the expense of strict accuracy; for in the previous verse, where our Revised Version employs the word 'jackals,' the Septuagint introduces beings whose voices are generally supposed to have been more attractive, the Sirens. The use of the word 'ass-centaurs' cannot therefore have been prompted by any pedantic notions of literal translation. The creatures, for all the lack of other literary warranty, must have been familiar to the popular imagination. And what may be gleaned from the passage concerning their character? Apparently they are the nearest Greek equivalent for 'howling creatures' and for 'night-monsters'; and such emphasis in the Greek is laid upon the statement that they will 'find rest for themselves and be at rest,' that they must surely in general have borne a character for restlessness. These restless noisy monsters of the night, in shape half-human and half-asinine, are clearly in character no less than in form the prototypes of some modern Callicantzari.

Of the many traits inherited by the Callicantzari from the Satyrs and Sileni, the usual comrades of Dionysus, I have already spoken. So far as outward appearance is concerned, the Satyrs as they came to be pourtrayed in the later Greek art are clearly responsible for the goat-type so common in the description of the Callicantzari, while a reminiscence of the Sileni may perhaps be traced in the rarer bald-headed type. But as regards their manner of life, which as I have shown bears many resemblances to that of

[1] Isaiah xxxiv. 14.

the Satyrs—their boisterous merriment and rioting, their love of wine, their violence, and their lewdness—these traits cannot of course be referred to the Satyrs any more than to the hippocentaurs or for that matter to the onocentaurs who were probably no more sober or chaste than their kindred. Rather it was the common possession of these qualities by the several types of half-human and half-bestial monsters that allowed them to be grouped together under the single name of Callicantzari.

Thus the conclusion drawn from an historical survey of those ancient festivals which are now represented by the Twelve Days, namely that the Callicantzari are the modern representatives of Dionysus' monstrous comrades, is both corroborated and amplified by the etymological identification of the Callicantzari (or in the simple and unadorned form, the *σκατζάρια*) with the Centaurs, of whom the Satyrs and the Sileni are species.

The remaining modern name on which I have to touch readily explains itself in the light of what has already been said. If the word *κάντζαρος* is the modern form of *κένταυρος*, and if by the name 'Centaur' was denoted a being half-human and half-animal both in shape and in character, then the name *λυκοκάντζαρος* clearly should mean a creature half-man half-wolf, such as the ancients might have called a lycocentaur, but did actually name *λυκάνθρωπος*. Lycocantzaros then etymologically should mean the werewolf—a man transformed either by his own power or by some external influence into a wolf.

The idea of lycanthropy has probably been familiar to the peasants of Greece continuously from the earliest ages down to the present day, either surviving traditionally like so many other beliefs, or possibly stimulated by actual experiences; for lycanthropy is not a mere figment of the imagination, but is a very real and terrible form of madness, under the influence of which the sufferer believes himself transformed (and by dress or lack of it tries to transfigure himself) into a wolf or other wild animal, and in that state develops and satisfies a craving for human flesh. Outbreaks of it were terribly frequent in the east of Europe during the Middle Ages, especially among the Slavonic populations; and it is not likely that Greece wholly escaped this scourge. But whether the idea received some such impetus or no, it was certainly known to the ancient Greeks, and is not wholly forgotten

at the present day. This was curiously betrayed by some questions put to an American archaeologist by an Arcadian peasant. Among the items of falsehood vended as news by the Greek press he had seen, but owing to the would-be classical style had failed to understand, certain allegations concerning the cannibalistic habits of Red Indians; and the points on which he sought enlightenment were, first, whether they ran on all fours, and, secondly, whether they went naked or wore wolf-skins. In effect the only form of savagery familiar to his mind was that of the werewolf.

Now here, it might be thought, is the clue by which to explain the first conclusion which we reached, namely, that the Callicantzari were originally men capable of transformation into beasts. The name λυκοκάντζαρος or werewolf, it might be urged, involved the idea of such transformation; and the idea originally associated with the one species was extended to the whole tribe of Callicantzari. At first sight such an explanation is attractive and appears tenable; but maturer consideration compels me to reject it.

In the first place, although the word λυκοκάντζαρος cannot etymologically have meant anything but werewolf when it was first employed, at the present day in the few districts where the name may be heard, in Cynouria, in Messenia, and, so far as I can ascertain, in Crete, it involves no idea of the transformation of men into beasts; it is merely a variant form for καλλικάντζαρος and in no way distinguished from it in meaning, and the Callicantzari in those districts are demons of definite hybrid form, not men temporarily transformed into beasts. And conversely in the Cyclades and other places where the belief in this transformation of men is prevalent, the compound λυκοκάντζαρος seems to be unknown, and καλλικάντζαρος (or some dialectic form of the same word) is in vogue. Since then in many places where the generic name Callicantzari is alone in use, the human origin of these monsters is maintained, while in those few districts where the specific name Lycocantzari is also used that human origin is denied, it is hard to believe that in this respect the surviving ideas concerning the genus can be the outcome of obsolete ideas concerning the species.

Secondly, if for the sake of argument it be granted that the Callicantzari had always been demons, how came the werewolf, the λυκάνθρωπος, whose very name proved him half-human, to change

that name to λυκοκάντζαρος? How came a man who occasionally turned into a wolf to be classified as one species in a genus of beings who *ex hypothesi* were not human even in origin, but demoniacal? We should have to suppose that the peasants of that epoch in which the change of name occurred did not distinguish between men and demons—which, as Euclid puts it, is absurd; wherefore the supposition that the Callicantzari had always been regarded as demons until werewolves were admitted to their ranks cannot be maintained. Rather the point of resemblance between the earliest Callicantzari and werewolves, which made the amalgamation of them possible, must have been the belief that both alike were men transformed into animals.

Since then the belief in the metamorphosis of men into Callicantzari existed before that epoch—a quite indeterminate epoch, I am afraid—in which the word λυκάνθρωπος fell into desuetude[1] and was replaced by λυκοκάντζαρος, where are we to look for the origin of the idea?

Since the Callicantzari bear the name of the Centaurs, it is obvious that the enquiry must be carried yet further back, and that the ancient ideas concerning the Centaurs' origin must be investigated. Pindar touches often upon the Centaur-myths; what view did he take of the Centaurs' nature? Were they divine in origin or human? We shall see that he held no settled view on the subject. Both traditions concerning the origin of the Centaurs were familiar to him just as both traditions still prevail in modern accounts of the Callicantzari; sometimes he follows the one, sometimes the other. On the one hand the Centaur Chiron is consistently described as divine. 'Fain would I,' says Pindar[2], 'that Chiron...wide-ruling scion of Cronos the son of Ouranos were living and not gone, and that the Beast of the wilds were ruling o'er the glens of Pelion'; and again he names him 'Chiron son of Cronos[3]' and 'the Beast divine[4].' In Pindar's view Chiron, be he Beast or God, is certainly not human; and if he is once named by the same poet 'the Magnesian Centaur[5],' the

[1] I cannot of course absolutely affirm that the word is extinct in every dialect even now; but the only suggestion of its use which I can find is in a story of Hahn's collection (*Alban. und Griech. Märch.* II. 189), where the German translation has the strange word 'Wolfsmann.'

[2] *Pyth.* III. 1—4.

[3] *Ibid.* IV. 115.

[4] *Ibid.* IV. 119.

[5] *Ibid.* III. 45.

epithet need only perhaps declare his habitation. His divinity is plainly asserted, and the legend that he resigned the divine guerdon of immortality in order to deliver Prometheus accords with Pindar's doctrine.

But on the other hand the story of Ixion as told by Pindar reveals another tradition. Ixion himself was human; for his presumptuous sin of lusting after the wife of Zeus 'swiftly he suffered as he, mere man, deserved, and won a misery unique[1].' The son of Ixion therefore by a nebulous mother could not be divine. The cloud wherewith in his delusion he had mated 'bare unto him, unblest of the Graces, a monstrous son, a thing apart even as she, with no rank either among men or where gods have their portion; him she nurtured and named Centauros; and he in the dales of Pelion did mate with Magnesian mares, and thence there sprang a wondrous warrior-tribe like unto both their parents—like to their dams in their nether parts, and the upper frame their sire's[2].' The first Centaur then, the founder of the race, though only half-human in origin, was in no respect divine. How then came Chiron, one of that race, to be divine? The two traditions are inconsistent. Pindar as a poet was not troubled thereby; he chose now the one, now the other, for his art to embroider. But in the science of mythology the discrepancy of the two traditions is important. Once more we must carry our search further back—to Hesiod and to Homer.

The former, in placing the battle of the Lapithae and the Centaurs among the scenes wrought on the shield of Heracles[3], says never a word to suggest that either set of combatants were other than human; the contrast between them lies wholly in the weapons they use. The Lapithae have their leaders enumerated, Caineus, Dryas, Pirithous, and the rest; the Centaurs in like manner are gathered about their chieftains, 'huge Petraeos and Asbolos the augur and Arctos and Oureios and black-haired Mimas and the two sons of Peukeus, Perimedes and Dryalos.' The account reads like a description of a fight between two tribes, one of them equipped with body-armour and using spears, the other more primitive and armed only with rude wooden weapons.

[1] *Pyth.* II. 29.
[2] *Pyth.* II. 42—48.
[3] Hesiod, *Shield of Heracl.* 178—188.

To this representation of the Centaurs Homer also, in the *Iliad*, consents; for, though he names them Pheres or 'Beasts,' it is quite clear that this is the proper name of a tribe of men—men who dwelt on Mount Pelion and were hardly less valiant than the heroes who conquered them. 'Never saw I,' says Nestor, 'nor shall see other such men as were Pirithous and Dryas, shepherd of hosts, and Caineus and Exadios and godlike Polyphemus and Theseus, son of Aegeus, like unto the immortals. Mightiest in sooth were they of men upon the earth, and against mightiest fought, even the mountain-haunting Pheres, and fearfully they did destroy them[1].' And again we hear how Pirithous 'took vengeance on the shaggy Pheres, and drave them forth from Pelion to dwell nigh unto the Aethices[2].' Apart from the name 'Pheres,' which will shortly be examined, there is nothing in these passages any more than in that of Hesiod to suggest that the conflict of the Lapithae and the Centaurs means anything but the destruction or expulsion of a primitive and wild mountain-tribe by a people who, in the wearing of body-armour, had advanced one important step in material civilisation. Yet in some respects the tribe of Centaurs were, according to Homer, at least the equals of their neighbours; for Chiron, 'the justest of the Centaurs[3],' was the teacher both of the greatest warrior, Achilles[4], and of the greatest physician, Asclepios[5]. The only passage of Homer which has been held to imply that the Centaurs were not men comes not from the *Iliad* but from the *Odyssey*[6]—ἐξ οὗ Κενταύροισι καὶ ἀνδράσι νεῖκος ἐτύχθη—which Miss Harrison[7] translates 'Thence gan the feud 'twixt Centaurs and mankind,' inferring therefrom the non-humanity of the Centaurs. It is however legitimate to take the word ἀνδράσι in a stricter sense, and to render the line, 'Thence arose the feud between Centaurs and heroes,' to wit, the heroes Pirithous, Dryas, and others; and the inference is then impaired. But in any case the *Iliad*, the earlier authority, consistently depicts both Chiron and the other Centaurs as human. The tradition of a divine origin must have arisen between the date of the *Iliad* and the time of Pindar, and from then until now popular opinion must have been divided on the question whether

[1] Hom. *Il.* I. 262–8.
[2] Hom. *Il.* II. 743.
[3] *Il.* XI. 832.
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Il.* IV. 219.
[6] Hom. *Od.* XXI. 303.
[7] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 382.

the Centaurs, the Callicantzari, were properly men or demons. But one part of the conclusion at which we first arrived, namely that Callicantzari were originally men, is justified by Homer's and Hesiod's testimony.

What then of the other part of that conclusion? There is ancient proof that the Callicantzari were originally men; but what witness is there to the metamorphosis of those men into beasts? The Centaurs' alternative name, Pheres.

An ethnological explanation of this name has recently been put forward by Prof. Ridgeway[1]. Concluding from the evidence of the *Iliad* that 'the Pheres are as yet nothing more than a mountain tribe and are not yet conceived as half-horse half-man,' he points out, on the authority of Pindar, that Pelion was the country of the Magnetes[2] and that Chiron not only dwelt in a cave on Pelion, but is himself called a Magnete[3]. 'It is then probable,' he continues[4], 'that the Centaur myth originated in the fact that the older race (the Pelasgians) had continued to hold out in the mountains, ever the last refuge of the remnants of conquered races. At first the tribes of Pelion may have been friendly to the (Achaean) invader who was engaged in subjugating other tribes with whom they had old feuds; and as the Norman settlers in Ireland gave their sons to be fostered by the native Irish, so the Achaean Peleus entrusted his son to the old Chiron. Nor must it be forgotten that conquering races frequently regard the conquered both with respect and aversion. They respect them for their skill as wizards, because the older race are familiar with the spirits of the land....On the other hand, as the older race have been driven into the most barren parts of the land, and are being continually pressed still further back, and have their women carried off, they naturally lose no opportunity of making reprisals on their enemies, and sally forth from their homes in the mountains or forests to plunder and in their turn to carry off women. The conquering race consequently regard the aborigines with hatred, and impute to them every evil quality, though when it is necessary to employ sorcery they will always resort to one of the hated race.'

[1] *Early Age of Greece*, I. pp. 173 ff.
[2] *Pyth.* IV. 80.
[3] *Pyth.* III. 45.
[4] *Early Age of Greece*, I. pp. 175–6.

Then follow a series of instances from various parts of the world which amply justify this estimate of the relations between conquerors and conquered. But in applying the principle thus obtained to the case of the Centaurs Prof. Ridgeway goes a little further. 'As it is therefore certain that aboriginal tribes who survive in mountains and forests are considered not only possessed of skill in magic, but as also bestial in their lusts, *and are even transformed into vipers and wild beasts by the imagination of their enemies*, we may reasonably infer from the Centaur myth that the ancient Pelasgian tribes of Pelion and Ossa had been able to defy the invaders of Thessaly, and that they had from the remotest times possessed these mountains.

'We can now explain why they are called Pheres, Centauri and Magnetes. Scholars are agreed in holding that Pheres (φῆρες) is only an Aeolic form for θῆρες, "wild beasts." Such a name is not likely to have been assumed by the tribe itself, but is rather an opprobrious term applied to them by their enemies. Centauri was probably the name of some particular clan of Magnetes[1].'

Prof. Ridgeway then, as I understand, believes the Centauri to have been named Pheres or 'Beasts' by their enemies because they were bestial in character, and supports his view by the statement which I have italicised. On this point I join issue.

First, the phrase in question is based upon one only out of the many instances which he adduces as evidence of the relations between invaders and aborigines—and that the most dubious, for it depends upon a somewhat arbitrary interpretation of a passage[2] of Procopius. 'He wrote,' says Prof. Ridgeway[3], 'in the sixth century of Britain thus: "The people who in old time lived in this island of Britain built a great wall, which cut off a considerable portion of it. On either side of this wall the land, climate and everything are different. For the district to the east of the wall enjoys a healthy climate, changing with the seasons, being moderately warm in summer and cool in winter. It is thickly inhabited by people who live in the same way as other folk." After enumerating its natural advantages he then proceeds to say that "On the west of the wall everything is quite the opposite; so

[1] Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, I. p. 178.
[2] *De bello Gothico*, IV. 20 (Niebuhr, 1833, p. 565).
[3] *Early Age of Greece*, I. pp. 177–8.

that, forsooth, it is impossible for a man to live there for half-an-hour. Vipers and snakes innumerable and every kind of wild beast share the possession of that country between them; and what is most marvellous, the natives say that if a man crosses the wall and enters the district beyond it, he immediately dies, being quite unable to withstand the pestilential climate which prevails there, and that any beasts that wander in there straightway meet their death."

'There seems little doubt that the wall here meant is the Wall of Hadrian, for the ancient geographers are confused about the orientation of the island.

'It is therefore probable that the vipers and wild beasts who lived beyond the wall were nothing more than the Caledonians, nor is it surprising to learn that a sudden death overtook either man or beast that crossed into their territory.'

That a native British statement made in the sixth century to the effect that the country beyond Hadrian's wall was pestilential in climate and infested with vipers, snakes, and wild beasts, should be considered as even probable evidence that either the Romans or the natives of Britain regarded the Caledonians as noxious animals, is to me surprising. The question whether the Centaurs were called Pheres because of their bestial repute among neighbouring tribes must be decided independently of that inference and on its own merits.

Secondly then, was there anything bestial in the conduct of the Centaurs, as known to Homer, which could have won for them the name of 'Beasts'? All that ancient mythology tells of their conduct may be briefly summarised; they fought with the men and carried off the women of neighbouring tribes, and occasionally drank wine to excess. Were the Achaeans then such ardent abstainers that they dubbed those who indulged too freely in intoxicants 'Beasts'? Did the invaders of Greece and the assailants of Troy hold fighting so reprehensible? Or was it the Centaurs' practice of carrying off the women of their enemies which convicted them of 'bestial lust'? In all ages surely *humanum est errare,* but in that early age the practice was not only human but manly; the enemy's womenfolk were among the rightful prizes of a raid. There is nothing then in mythology to warrant the belief that the Centaurs' moral conduct was such

as to win for them, in that age, the opprobrious name of 'Beasts.'

And here Art supports Mythology; for clearly the representation of the Centaurs in semi-animal form cannot be dissociated from their name of Pheres; the same idea must lie at the root of both. If then the name Pheres was given to the Centaurs because of their violence or lust, the animal portion of them in the representations of early Greek Art should have been such as to express one or both of those qualities. But what do we find? In discussing the development of the horse-centaur in art, Miss Harrison[1] points out that though in horse-loving Athens, by the middle of the fifth century B.C., the equine element predominated in the composite being, 'in archaic representations the reverse is the case. The Centaurs are in art what they are in reality, *men* with men's legs and feet, but they are shaggy mountain-men with some of the qualities and habits of beasts; so to indicate this in a horse-loving country they have the hind-quarters of a horse awkwardly tacked on to their human bodies.' Now the particular 'qualities and habits of beasts,' if such there be, in the Centaurs must be their violence and lust. Are these then adequately symbolised by 'the hind-quarters of a horse awkwardly tacked on to their human bodies'? In scenes of conflict, in the archaic representations, it is the human part of the Centaur which bears the brunt of the fight, and the weapon used is a branch of a tree, the primitive human weapon; the Centaur fights as a man fights. If he had been depicted with horns or teeth or claws as his weapons of offence, then the animal part of him would fairly symbolise his bestial violence; but who could discover a trace of pugnacity in his equine loins and rump, hind legs and tail? Or again if pugnacity is not the particular quality which caused the Centaurs to be named 'Beasts' and to be pourtrayed in half-animal form, is it their lewdness which art thus endeavoured to suggest? Surely, if the early artists had understood that the name Pheres was a contemptuous designation of a tribe bestial in their lust, Greek taste was not so intolerant of ithyphallic representations that they need have had recourse to so cryptic a symbol as the hind-quarters of a horse. But if it be supposed that, while a sense of modesty,

[1] *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 382.

unknown to later generations, deterred those early artists from a more obvious method of expressing their meaning, the idea of the Centaurs' lewdness was really present to their minds, then Chiron too falls under the same condemnation and is tainted with the same vice as the rest. 'A black-figured vase,' says Prof. Ridgeway, *à propos* of the virtues, not of the vices, of this one Centaur, 'shows the hero (Peleus) bringing the little Achilles to Chiron, who is depicted as a venerable old man with a white beard and clad in a long robe from under the back of which issues the hinder part of a diminutive pony, the equine portion being a mere adjunct to the complete human figure[1].' So far then as the animal part is concerned, the representation of Chiron in early art differs no whit from that of other Centaurs, and the quality, which is symbolised by the equine adjunct in these, is imputed to him also. Yet to convict of bestial lust the virtuous Chiron, the chosen teacher of great heroes, is intolerable. In effect, no explanation of the name Pheres in mythology and of the biform representation of the Centaurs in art can be really satisfactory which does not reckon with Chiron, the most famous and 'the most just' of the Centaurs, as well as with the rest of the tribe. Some characteristic common to them all—and therefore not lust or any other evil passion—must be the basis of any adequate interpretation of the name 'Beasts.'

If then the name Pheres cannot have been an opprobrious term applied to the Pelasgian tribe of Centauri by the Achaean invaders in token of their lusts or other evil qualities, can it have been a term of respect? It may not now sound a respectful title; but in view of that ethnological principle which Prof. Ridgeway enunciates, namely 'that conquering races frequently regard the conquered both with respect and aversion,' the enquiry is worth pursuing. The principle itself seems to me well established; it is only his application of it in the particular case of the Centaurs to which I have demurred.

The conquering race, he shows, are apt to respect the conquered for their skill as wizards. This certainly holds true in the case before us. Chiron was of high repute in the arts of magic

[1] Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, I. p. 174. The vase in question is figured by Colvin in *Journ. of Hellenic Studies*, Vol. I. p. 131, Pl. 2, and by Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena* etc. p. 384.

and prophecy. It was from him that Asclepios learned 'to be a healer of the many-plaguing maladies of men; and thus all that came unto him whether plagued with self-grown sores or with limbs wounded by the lustrous bronze or stone far-hurled, or marred by summer heat or winter cold—these he delivered, loosing each from his several infirmity, some with emollient spells and some by kindly potions, or else he hung their limbs with charms, or by surgery he raised them up to health[1].' And it was Chiron too to whom Apollo himself resorted for counsel, and from whom he learned the blissful destiny of the maiden Cyrene[2]. Nor was Chiron the only exponent of such arts among the Centaurs; for Hesiod names also Asbolos as a diviner.

If then the tribe of Centaurs enjoyed a reputation for sorcery, could this have won for them the name of 'Beasts'? Can it have been that, in the exercise of their magic powers, they were believed able to transform themselves into beasts?

Within the limits of Greek folk-lore we have already once encountered such a belief, namely in the case of the 'Striges,' old witches capable of turning themselves into birds of prey; and in the folk-lore of the world at large the idea is extremely frequent. There is no need to encumber this chapter with a mass of recorded instances; the verdict of the first authority on the subject is sufficient. According to Tylor[3], the belief 'that certain men, by natural gift or magic art, can turn for a time into ravening wild beasts' is 'a widespread belief, extending through savage, barbaric, classic, oriental, and mediaeval life, and surviving to this day in European superstition.' 'The origin of this idea,' he says, 'is by no means sufficiently explained,' but he notes that 'it really occurs that, in various forms of mental disease, patients prowl shyly, long to bite and destroy mankind, and even fancy themselves transformed into wild beasts.' Whether such cases of insanity are the cause or the effect of the belief, he does not determine; but he adds, what is most important to the present issue, that 'professional sorcerers have taken up the idea, as they do any morbid delusion, and pretend to turn themselves and others into beasts by magic art'; and, later on[4], citing by way

[1] Pind. *Pyth.* III. 45 ff. (transl. Myers).
[2] Pind. *Pyth.* IX. 31 ff.
[3] *Primitive Culture*, Vol. I. p. 308. For a mass of instances, see pp. 308—315.
[4] *Op. cit.* I. p. 312.

of illustration a passage of the *Eclogues*[1], in which Vergil 'tells of Moeris as turning into a wolf by the use of poisonous herbs, as calling up souls from the tombs, and as bewitching away crops,' he points out that in the popular opinion of Vergil's age 'the arts of the werewolf, the necromancer or "medium," and the witch, were different branches of one craft.'

If then the Centaurs were a tribe of reputed sorcerers and also obtained the secondary name of 'Beasts,' the analogy of world-wide superstitions suggests that the link between these two facts is to be found in their magical power of assuming the shape of beasts.

What particular beast-shape the Centaurs most often affected need not much concern us. The analogy, on which my interpretation of the name Pheres rests, makes certainly for some shape more terrifying than that of a horse; and the word φῆρες itself also denotes wild and savage beasts rather than domestic animals. But the horse-centaur, though it monopolised art, was not the only form of centaur known, nor, if we may judge from modern descriptions of the Callicantzari, had it so firm a hold on the popular imagination as some other types. Possibly its very existence is due only to the aesthetic taste of a horse-loving people. Pindar certainly knew of one Centaurus earlier in date and far more monstrous than the horse-centaurs which artists chose to depict, and provided a genealogy accordingly. Moreover in the passage of Hesiod which I have quoted above and which, by its agreement with the *Iliad* as to the human character of the Centaurs, is proved to embody an early tradition, there is at least a suggestion of a more savage form assumed by the Centaurs. Several of their names in that passage[2] seem to indicate various qualities and habits which they possessed. One is called Petraeos, because the Centaurs lived in rocky caves or because they hurled rocks at their foes; another is Oureios, because they were a mountain-tribe; then there are the two sons of Peukeus, so named because the Centaurs' weapons were pine-branches. And why is

[1] Verg. *Ecl.* VIII. 95.

[2] Hesiod, *Shield of Heracles*, 178 ff. Cf. also the names Ἄγριος and Ἔλατος (suggesting ἐλάτη, the fir-tree from which their weapons were made) in Apollodor. II. 5. 4. The name Ἀσβολος in Hesiod, meaning 'soot,' I cannot interpret; for it is hard to suppose that the ancient Centaurs, like the Callicantzari, came down the chimney. But the word is possibly corrupt; for Ovid (*Met.* XII. 307) refers to an augur Astylus among the Centaurs.

another named Arctos? Is it not because the Centaurs assumed by sorcery the form of bears? There is some probability then that the equine type of Centaur, the conventional Centaur of Greek Art, was a comparatively late development, and that the remote age which gave to the Centaurs the name of Pheres believed rather that that tribe of sorcerers were wont to transform themselves into the more monstrous and terrible shapes of bears and other wild beasts.

But if the particular animal which Greek artists selected as a component part of their Centaurs is thus of minor importance, the fact that their Centaurs were always composite in conception, always compounded of the human and the animal, is highly significant. In discussing the various types of Callicantzari in various parts of Greece, we found that, where there exists a belief in their power of metamorphosis, they are stated to appear in single and complete shapes, while, where the belief in their transformation is unknown, they are represented in composite shapes; and having previously concluded that the belief in their metamorphosis was a genuine and original factor in the superstition, we were led to formulate the principle, that a being of some single, normal, and known shape who has originally been believed capable of transforming himself into one or more other single, normal, and known shapes, comes to be represented, when the belief in his power of transformation dies out, as a being of composite, abnormal, and fantastic shape, combining incongruous features of the several single, normal, and known shapes. Now the horse-centaur of Greek Art is a being of composite, abnormal, and fantastic shape, combining incongruous features of man and animal. If then the principle based on facts of modern Greek folk-lore may be applied to the facts of ancient Greek folk-lore, the horse-centaur of Greek Art replaced a completely human Centaur capable of transforming himself into completely animal form.

Moreover I am inclined to think that such a development was likely to occur in the representations of art even more readily than in verbal descriptions. For even if the artist belonged to an age which had not yet forgotten that the Centaurs were human beings capable of turning themselves by sorcery into beasts, how was he to distinguish the Centaur in his picture either from an ordinary man, if the Centaur were in his ordinary human shape, or

from a real animal, if the Centaur were in his assumed shape? He might of course have drawn an ordinary man and have inscribed the legend, 'This is a Centaur capable of assuming other forms'; or he might have drawn an ordinary animal with the explanatory note, 'This is not really an animal but a Centaur in disguise.' But if such expedients did not satisfy his artistic instincts, what was he to do? Surely his only course was to depict the Centaur in his normal human shape, and by some animal adjunct to indicate his powers of transformation. And that is what he did; for in the earliest art the fore part of the Centaur is a complete human figure, and the hind part is a somewhat disconnected equine appendage[1].

Nor is this artistic convention without parallel in ancient Greece. At Phigalea there was once, we are told, an ancient statue of Demeter represented as a woman with the head and mane of a horse; and the explanation of this equine adjunct was that she had once assumed the form of a mare[2]. In other words, the power of transformation was indicated in art by a composite form.

Hence indeed it is not unlikely that the very method which early artists adopted of indicating the Centaurs' power to assume various single forms, being misunderstood by later generations among whom the Centaurs' human origin and faculty of magical transformation were no longer predominant traditions, contributed not a little to the conception of Centaurs in an invariable composite form; and that later art, by blending the two incongruous elements into a more harmonious but less significant whole, confirmed men in that misunderstanding, until the old traditions became a piece of rare and local lore.

Thus on three separate grounds—the analogy of world-wide superstition which attributes to sorcerers the power of assuming bestial form; the tendency detected in modern Greek folk-lore to replace beings of single shape, but capable of transforming themselves into other single shapes, by creatures of composite shape; and the contrast between the horse-centaurs of archaic art and those of the Parthenon—we are led to the same conclusion, namely that the Centaurs were a tribe of reputed sorcerers whose most

[1] Cf. Miss J. Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 383–4.
[2] Paus. VIII. 42. 1—4. Cf. VIII. 25. 5.

striking manifestation of power, in the eyes of their Achaean neighbours, was to turn themselves into wild beasts. The name Pheres was then in truth a title of respect, a title in no way derogatory to the virtuous Chiron, who, if he exercised his magical powers chiefly in mercy and healing, shared doubtless with the other Centaurs the miraculous faculty of metamorphosis.

Our first conclusion then concerning the Callicantzari, namely that they were originally men capable of turning into beasts, was no less correct than the second conclusion which showed them as the modern representatives of Dionysus' attendant Satyrs and Sileni. Where the beliefs in their human origin and in their power of metamorphosis still prevail, Greek tradition has preserved not only the name but the essential character of the ancient Centaurs.

Does it seem hardly credible that popular tradition should still faithfully record a superstition which dates from before Homer and yet is practically ignored by Greek literature? Still if the fidelity of the common-folk's memory is guaranteed in many details by its agreement with that which literature does record, it would be folly to disregard it where literature is silent or prefers another of the still prevalent traditions. Let us take only Apollodorus' account[1] of the fight of Heracles with the Centaurs and mark the several points in which it confirms the present beliefs about the Callicantzari. The old home, he says, of the Centaurs before they came to Malea was Pelion; Pelion is now the place where above all others stories of the Callicantzari are rife; and in the neighbouring island of Sciathos it is believed[2] that they come at Christmas not from the lower world, but from the mainland, the old country of the Magnetes; even local associations then seem to have survived, just as in the modern stories about Demeter from Eleusis and from Phigaleia. Heracles was entertained in the cave of the Centaur Pholos; the Callicantzari likewise live in caves during their sojourn on earth, and their hospitality, though never sought, has been endured. The Centaur Pholos ate raw meat, though he provided his guest with cooked meat; the Callicantzari also regale themselves on uncooked food[3], toads and

[1] Apollodorus, II. 5. 4.

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 339.

[3] Stories of their coming to cook frogs etc. at the hearths of men occur, but only confirm the general belief that they have no fires of their own at which to cook, and are in general afraid of fire.

snakes for the most part, but in one Messenian story also raw dogs'-flesh[1]. Heracles broached a cask of wine, and Pholos' brother Centaurs smelt it and swarmed to the cave on mischief bent; the Callicantzari have the same love of wine and the same malevolence. The first of the Centaurs to enter the cave were put to flight by Heracles with fire-brands, and his ordinary weapon, the bow, was not used by him save to complete the rout; fire-brands are the right weapons with which to scare away the Callicantzari. Surely, when such correspondences as these attest the integrity of popular tradition for some two thousand years, there is nothing incredible in the supposition that there had been equal integrity in popular (as opposed to artistic and literary) traditions for another thousand years or more before that.

Thus then it appears that in some districts of modern Greece, in which there prevail the beliefs that the Callicantzari are, in their normal form, human and that they are capable of transforming themselves into beasts, popular tradition dates from the age in which the Achaean invaders credited the Pelasgian tribe of Centauri with magical powers and in token of one special manifestation thereof surnamed them Pheres.

In other districts, where the Callicantzari are represented as demoniacal and not human and as monsters of mixed rather than of variable shape, the popular memory goes back to a period somewhat less remote, that period in which a new conception, encouraged perhaps unwittingly by archaic art, became predominant in classical art and literature, with the further result, we must suppose, that in the minds of some of the common-folk too monsters of composite shape took the place of the old human wonder-working Centaurs.

And yet again in other districts, where the Christmas mummers in the guise of Callicantzari are the modern representatives of those worshippers of Dionysus who dressed themselves in the guise of Satyrs or Sileni, the traditions which survive are mainly those of a post-classical age in which the half-human half-animal comrades of Dionysus lost their distinctive names and were enrolled in the Centaurs' ranks.

Finally in the few districts where language at least testifies that werewolves have also been numbered among the Callicantzari,

[1] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. pp. 1297 and 1337.

popular belief, though preserving much that is ancient, may have been modified by a superstition, or rather by an actual form of insanity, which was particularly prevalent in the Middle Ages.

Such have been in different districts and periods the various developments of a superstition which originated in the reputation for sorcery enjoyed by a Pelasgian tribe inhabiting Mount Pelion in a prehistoric age; and the complexity of modern traditions concerning the Callicantzari is due to the fact that they do not all date from one epoch but comprise the whole history of the Centaurs.

## § 14. Genii.

The tale of deities is now almost told. There remain only a few miscellaneous beings, identical or, at the least, comparable with the creations of ancient superstition, who may be classed together under the name of *στοιχειά*[1] (anciently *στοιχεῖα*) or, to adopt the exact Latin equivalent, *genii*.

The Greek word, which in classical times served as a fair equivalent for any sense of our word 'elements,' became from Plato's time onward a technical term in physics for those first beginnings of the material world which Empedocles had previously called *ῥιζώματα* and other philosophers *ἀρχαί*. The physical elements however were commonly supposed to be haunted each by its own peculiar spirit, and hence among the later Platonists the term *στοιχεῖα* became a technicality of demonology rather than of natural science[2]. Every component part of the visible universe was credited with an invisible *genius*, a spirit whose being was in some way bound up with the existence of its abode; and the term *στοιχεῖον* was transferred from the material to the spiritual.

But though the Platonists invented and introduced this new sense of the word, its widespread acceptance was probably not their work, but a curious accident resulting from misinterpretation of early Christian writings. In St Paul's Epistles[3] there occurs several times a phrase, *τὰ στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου*, 'worldly principles,'

[1] The shift of accent is due to the synizesis of the syllables *-ει-α*, pronounced now as *-yá*.

[2] Du Cange, s.v. *στοιχεῖον*.

[3] *Coloss.* ii. 3 and 20; *Galat.* iv. 3 and 9.

which was apparently a little too cultured for many of those who heard or read it. It conveyed to their minds probably no more than 'being enslaved to weak and beggarly elements[1]' conveys to the British peasant of to-day. What more natural then than that the commentator should accept the word in the sense given to it by the Platonists, and that the common-folk who heard his exposition should readily identify the *στοιχεῖα* whom they were bidden no longer to serve with the lesser deities and local *genii* to whose service they had long been bound—to whose service moreover in spite of the supposed injunction they have always continued faithful? The Church, they would have felt, acknowledged the existence of these beings; ecclesiastical authority endorsed ancestral tradition; and since such beings existed, it were folly to ignore them; nay, since the Church declared that they were powers of evil, it was but prudent to propitiate them, to appease their malevolence. Thus *στοιχεῖα* came to be reckoned by every right-minded peasant among his regular demoniacal *entourage*. And so they remain—some of them hostile to man, some benevolent, but all alike wild, uncontrollable spirits—so that St Paul's phrase *στοιχεῖα τοῦ κόσμου* even appears in one folk-song metaphorically as a description of wild and wilful young men[2].

Thus the very origin of the term rendered it comprehensive in meaning. Even the greater deities of ancient Greece were, in a sense, local—the occupants of prescribed domains; Poseidon might logically be called the *genius* of the sea, Demeter of the corn-land; while lesser deities were always associated with particular spots and often unknown elsewhere. But mediaeval usage of the word *στοιχεῖον* and of its derivatives tended to widen the meaning of the word yet more. A verb *στοιχειοῦν*[3] was formed which properly meant to settle a *genius* in a particular place—either a beneficent *genius* to act as tutelary deity, or an evil *genius* whose range of activity would thus be circumscribed within known and narrower limits; but it was used also in a larger sense to denote the exercise of any magical powers. A corresponding adjective *στοιχειωματικός*[4] was applied

[1] *Galat.* iv. 9.

[2] Passow, *Popul. Carm.* no. 524. According to *Σκαρλάτος* (*Λεξικόν*, s.v.) *στοιχειόν* is sometimes a term of abuse; on that statement I base my interpretation of the folk-song.

[3] Du Cange, s.v.

[4] Du Cange, s.v.

to anyone who had dealings with *genii* or familiar spirits, and more vaguely to wizards in general. Thus the famous magician Apollonius of Tyana is described as a 'Pythagorean philosopher with power over *genii*' (*φιλόσοφος Πυθαγόρειος στοιχειωματικός*)[1]; and two out of his many miracles may be taken as typical of his exercise of the power. Once, it is recorded, he was summoned to Byzantium by the inhabitants and there 'he charmed (*ἐστοιχείωσεν*) snakes and scorpions not to strike, mosquitoes totally to disappear, horses to be quiet and not to be vicious either towards each other or towards man; the river Lycus also he charmed (*ἐστοιχείωσεν*) not to flood and do damage to Byzantium[2].' In the first part of this passage the verb is undoubtedly used in a very lax sense, for snakes, scorpions, mosquitoes, and horses can hardly have been conceived to have their own several *genii* or guardian-spirits upon whom magic could be exercised; but the charming of the river Lycus certainly suggests the restraining of the *στοιχεῖον* or *genius* of the river within settled bounds. This stricter sense of the word however comes out more clearly in relation to good *genii* who were settled by magical charms in any given object or place. Hence even the word *στοιχεῖον* reverted to a material sense, and was sometimes employed to mean a 'talisman[3]'—an object, that is, in which resided a *genius* capable of averting wars, pestilences, and suchlike. *Genii* of this kind, we are told, were settled by the same Apollonius in the statues throughout Constantinople[4], where the belief in their efficacy seems to have been generally accepted; for there was to be seen there a cross in the middle of which was 'the fortune of the city, namely a small chain having its ends locked together and possessed of power to keep the city abounding in all manner of goods and to give her victory ever over the nations (or heathen), that they should have strength no more to approach and draw nigh thereto, but should hold further aloof from her and retreat as though they had been vanquished. And the key of the chain was buried in the foundations of the pillars[5]' on which the cross

[1] Georg. Cedrenus (circ. 1050) *Historiarum Compendium*, p. 197 (edit. Paris).
[2] Cedrenus, *ibid.*
[3] *στοιχεῖον* pro eo quod *τέλεσμα* (whence by Arabic corruption our 'talisman') vocant Graeci, usurpant alii. Du Cange, *ibid.*
[4] Codinus (15th century), *de Originibus Constantinop.* p. 30 (edit. Paris) § 63.
[5] Codinus, *ibid.* p. 20. § 39.

rested. The locked chain was probably the magical means by which the tutelary *genius* of the city was kept at his post.

But these wide and vague usages of the word and its derivatives have now for the most part disappeared. Leo Allatius[1] still used στοιχειωματικός in the sense of 'magician,' but I have not found it in modern Greek. A remnant of the verb στοιχειοῦν[2] is seen in the past participle στοιχειωμένος, which at the present day is applied in its true sense to objects 'haunted by *genii*.' And the word στοιχειά, though locally extended in scope so as to become in effect synonymous with δαιμόνια or ἐξωτικά[3], comprising all non-Christian deities irrespectively of their close connexion with particular natural phenomena, still maintains in its more strict, and I think more frequent, usage the meaning of *genii*.

The term thus provided by the Platonists and popularised accidentally by the Church is a convenience in the classification of demons; for the ancient Greeks had no popular word which was exactly equivalent; they had to choose between the vague term δαιμόνιον which implied nothing of attachment to any place or object, and the special designation of the particular kind of *genius*. The Latin tongue was in this respect better supplied. It must not however be inferred that the introduction of the useful term στοιχεῖα into the demonological nomenclature of Greece marked any innovation in popular superstition. The Greeks no less than the Romans had from time immemorial believed in *genii*. That scene of the *Aeneid*[4], in which, while Aeneas is holding a memorial feast in honour of his father, a snake appears and tastes of the offerings and itself in turn is honoured with fresh sacrifice as being either the genius of the place or an attendant of the hero Anchises, is throughout Greek in tone; and the comment of Servius thereupon, 'There is no place without a *genius*, which usually manifests itself in the form of a snake,' revives a hundred memories of sacred snakes tended in the temples or depicted on the tombs of ancient Greece. Moreover several of the supernatural beings whom I have already described, and whose identity with the creatures of ancient superstition is

[1] *De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. xxi.

[2] The active of the verb also survives in a special sense, for which see below, p. 267. The modern form is στοιχειόνω: cf. δηλόνω for δηλόω, etc.

[3] See above, p. 69.

[4] Verg. *Aen.* v. 84 ff.

established, are essentially *genii*. The Lamia is the *genius* of the darksome cave where she makes her lair; the Gorgon, of the straits where she waylays her prey; and, most clearly of all, the Dryads are the *genii* of the trees which they inhabit. For the life of each one of them is bound up with the life of the tree in which she dwells; and still as in old time, so surely as the tree decays away with age, her life too is done and 'her soul leaves therewith the light of the sun[1].' The woodman of to-day therefore speaks with the utmost fidelity to ancient tradition when he calls the trees where his Nereids dwell στοιχειωμένα δέντρα, 'trees haunted by *genii*'; such innovation as there has been is in terminology only.

One word of caution only is required before we proceed to the consideration of various species of *genii* not yet described. It must not be assumed that all *genii*, on the analogy of the tree-nymphs, die along with the dissolution of their dwelling-places; the existence of the *genius* and that of the haunted object are indeed always closely and intimately united, but not necessarily in such a manner as to preclude the migration of the *genius* on the dissolution of its first abode into a second. The converse proposition however, that any object could enjoy prolonged existence after the departure from it of the indwelling power, may be considered improbable.

The *genii* with whom I now propose to deal fall into five main divisions according to their habitations. These are first buildings, secondly water, thirdly mountains, caves, and desert places, fourthly the air, fifthly human beings.

The *genii* of buildings are universally acknowledged in Greece. The forms in which they appear are various; this may partly be explained by the belief that they possess the power of assuming different shapes at will; but it is certain also that their normal shape is in some measure determined by the nature of the building—house, church, or bridge—of which each is the guardian.

The *genius* of a house appears almost always in the guise of a snake, or, according to Leo Allatius[2], of a lizard or other reptile. It is believed to have its permanent dwelling in the foundations, and

[1] *Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite*, 272. Cf. above, p. 156.
[2] *De quor. Graec. opinat.* cap. XXI.

not infrequently some hole or crevice in a rough cottage-floor is regarded as the entrance to its home. About such holes peasants have been known to sprinkle bread-crumbs[1]; and I have been informed, though I cannot vouch as an eye-witness for the statement, that on the festival of that saint whose name the master of a house bears, he will sometimes combine services to both his Christian and his pagan tutelary deities, substituting wine for the water on which the oil of the sacred lamp before the saint's *icon* usually floats, and pouring a libation of milk—for the older deities disapprove of intoxicants—about the aperture which leads down to the subterranean home of the *genius*. If it so happen that there is a snake in the hole and the milky deluge compels it speedily to issue from its hiding-place, its appearance in the house is greeted with a silent delight or with a few words of welcome quietly spoken. For on no account must the 'guardian of the house,' *νοικοκύρης*[2] or *τόπακας*[3], as it is sometimes called, be frightened by any sound or sudden movement. Much less of course must any physical hurt or violence be done to it; the consequences of such action, even though it be due merely to inadvertence, are swift and terrible; the house itself falls, or the member of the family who was guilty of the outrage dies in the self-same way in which he slew the snake[4].

These beliefs and customs are probably all of ancient date. Theophrastus[5] notes how the superstitious man, if he sees a snake in the house, sets up a shrine for it on the spot. The observation also of such snakes was a recognised department of 'domestic divination' (*οἰκοσκοπική*) on which one Xenocrates—not the disciple of Plato—wrote a treatise[6]. They were probably known as *οἰκουροί*, 'guardians of the house' (a name which is identical in meaning with the modern *νοικοκύρης*), for it is thus at any rate that Hesychius[7] designates the great snake which Herodotus[8] tells us was 'guardian (*φύλακα*) of the acropolis' at Athens, and

[1] B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 185.

[2] i.e. *οἰκοκύριος*, with initial *ν* attached (first in the accusative) from the article (*τὸν*) preceding. This is the ordinary word for 'the master of a house.'

[3] i.e. *δαίμων τοῦ τόπου*. The word is used in Cythnos and Cyprus. Cf. Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 124. Σακελλάριος, Κυπριακά, III. p. 286.

[4] For detailed stories in point, see Leo Allatius, *l. c.*, B. Schmidt, *op. cit.* pp. 186, 187.

[5] *Char.* 16.

[6] Suidas, s.vv. *οἰωνιστική* and *Ξενοκράτης*.

[7] s.v. *ὄφιν οἰκουρόν*.

[8] VIII. 41.

which, by leaving untouched the honey-cake with which it was fed every month, proved to the Athenians, when the second Persian invasion was threatening them, that their tutelary deity had departed from the acropolis, and decided them likewise to evacuate the city. Thus the few facts that are recorded about this belief in antiquity accord so exactly with modern observations, that from the minuter detail of the latter the outlines of the former may safely be filled in.

The *genii* of churches most commonly are seen or heard in the form of oxen—bulls for the most part[1], but also steers and heifers[2]. They appear, like all *genii*, most frequently at night, and, according to one authority, 'are adorned with various precious stones which diffuse a brightness such as to light the whole church.' 'They are seldom harmful,' continues the same writer[3]: 'the few that are so—called simply *κακά*—do not dare to make their abode within the churches, but have their lairs close to them in order to do hurt to church-goers.... Near Calamáta, on a mountain-side, there is a chapel of ease dedicated to St George. The peasants narrate that at each annual festival held there on April 23rd a *genius* used to issue forth from a hole close by and to devour one of the festal gathering. After some years the good people, seeing that there was no remedy for this annual catastrophe, decided to give up the festival. But a week before the feast St George appeared to them all simultaneously in a dream, and assured them that they should suffer no hurt at the festival, because he had sealed up the monster. And in fact they went there and found the hole closed by a massive stone, on which was imprinted the mark of a horse's hoof; for St George, willing that the hole should remain always closed, had made his horse strike the stone with his hoof. Thenceforth the saint has borne the surname Πεταλώτης (from *πέταλον* the 'shoe' or 'hoof' of a horse) and up to this day is shewn the hoof-mark upon a stone.'

Harmless *genii* however are more frequently assigned to churches, exercising a kind of wardenship over them and taking an interest in the parishioners. At Marousi, a village near Athens, there is a church which is still believed to have a

[1] Cf. Passow, *Popul. Carm.*, Index, s.v. *στοιχεῖον*.
[2] Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 134. [3] Πολίτης, *l. c.*

*genius*, in the form of a bull, lurking in its foundations; and when any parishioner is about to die, the bull is heard to bellow three times at midnight. A church in Athens used to claim the same distinction, and the bellowing of the bull there is said to have been heard within living memory at the death of an old man named Lioules[1]. Other churches also in Athens, not to be outdone, pretended to the possession of *genii* in the shapes of a snake, a black cock, and a woman, who all followed the bull's example and emitted their appropriate cries thrice at midnight as a presage of similar events[2].

Why the *genii* of churches in particular appear mostly as bulls, I cannot determine. When the *genius* of a river manifests itself in that form, the connexion with antiquity is obvious; for river-gods, who *ex vi termini* are the *genii* of the rivers whose name they share, were constantly pourtrayed of old in the form of bulls. All that can be said is that the type of *genius* is old, though its localisation is new and difficult to explain.

The *genii* of bridges cannot properly, I suppose, be distinguished from the *genii* of those rivers or ravines which the bridges span. They are usually depicted as dragons or other formidable monsters, and they are best known for the cruel toll which they exact when the bridge is a-building. The original conception is doubtless that of the river-god demanding a sacrifice, even of human life, in compensation for men's encroachment upon his domain. The most famous of the folk-songs which celebrate such a theme is associated with 'the Bridge of Arta,' but many versions[3] of it have been published from different districts, and in some the names of other bridges are substituted; in Crete the story is attached to the 'shaking bridge' over a mountain torrent near Canea[4]; in the Peloponnese to 'the Lady's bridge' over the river Ladon[5]; in the neighbourhood of Thermopylae to a bridge over the river Helláda[6]; in the island of Cos to the old bridge of Antimachia[7]. The song, in the version[8] which I select, runs thus:

[1] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. III. p. 155.
[2] Καμπούρογλου, *op. cit.* I. 226.
[3] e.g. Passow, *Popul. Carm.* nos. 511, 512.
[4] Ἀντωνιάδης, Κρητητίς, p. 247 (from Πολίτης, *op. cit.* p. 141).
[5] Πολίτης, *ibid.*
[6] Ἰατρίδης, Συλλογὴ δημοτ. ἀσμάτων, pp. 28—30 (Πολίτης, *ibid.*).
[7] W. H. D. Rouse in *Folklore*, June, 1899 (Vol. x. no. 2), pp. 182 ff.
[8] Passow, no. 511, and Ζαμπέλιος, Ἄσματα δημοτικὰ τῆς Ἑλλάδος, p. 757.

'Apprentices three-score there were, and craftsmen five and forty,
For three long years they laboured sore to build the bridge of Arta;
All the day long they builded it, each night it fell in ruin.
The craftsmen fall to loud lament, th' apprentices to weeping:
"Alas, alas for all our toil, alack for all our labour,
That all day long we're building it, at night it falls in ruin."
Then from the rightmost arch thereof the demon gave them answer:
"An ye devote not human life, no wall hath sure foundation;
And now devote not orphan-child, nor wayfarer, nor stranger,
But give your master-craftsman's wife, his wife so fair and gracious,
That cometh late toward eventide, that cometh late toward supper."
The master-craftsman heard it well, and fell as one death-stricken;
A word anon he writes and bids the nightingale to carry:
"Tarry to don thy best array, tarry to come to supper,
Tarry to go upon thy way across the bridge of Arta."
The nightingale heard not aright, and carried other message:
"Hurry to don thy best array, hurry to come to supper,
Hurry to go upon thy way across the bridge of Arta."
Lo, there she came, now full in view, along the dust-white roadway;
The master-craftsman her espied, and all his heart was breaking;
E'en from afar she bids them hail, e'en from afar she greets them:
"Gladness and health, my masters all, apprentices and craftsmen!
What ails the master-craftsman then that he is so distressèd?"
"Nought ails save only that his ring by the first arch is fallen;
Who shall go in and out again his ring thence to recover?"
"Master, be not so bitter-grieved, I will go fetch it for thee;
Let me go in and out again thy ring thence to recover."
Not yet had she made full descent, not halfway had descended;
"Draw up the rope, prithee goodman, draw up the cable quickly,
For all the world is upside down, and nought have I recovered."
One plies the spade to cover her, another shovels mortar,
The master-craftsman lifts a stone, and hurls it down upon her.
"Alas, alas for this our doom, alack for our sad fortune!
Three sisters we, and for all three a cruel fate was written.
One went to building Doúnavi, the next to build Avlóna,
And I, the last of all the three, must build the bridge of Arta.
Even as trembles my poor heart, so may the bridge-way tremble,
Even as my fair tresses fall, so fall all they that cross it!"
"Nay, change, girl, prithee change thy speech, and utter other presage;
Thou hast one brother dear to thee, and haply he may pass it."
Then changèd she her speech withal, and uttered other presage:
"As iron now is my poor heart, as iron stand the bridge-way,
As iron are my tresses fair, iron be they that cross it!
For I've a brother far away, and haply he may pass it."'

But while the most famous examples of sacrifice to *genii* are connected with bridges, the custom in a less criminal form than

that which the folk-songs celebrate is common throughout Greece to-day. In building a house or any other edifice, the question of propitiating the *genius* already in possession of the site and of inducing it to become the guardian of the building is duly considered. Sacrifice is done. The peace-offering, according to the importance of the building and the means of the future owner, may consist of an ox, a ram, a he-goat, or a cock (or, less commonly, of a hen with her brood[1]), preferably of black colour, as were in old time victims designed for gods beneath the earth. The selected animal is in Acarnania and Aetolia[2] taken to the site, and there its throat is cut so that the blood may fall on the foundation-stone, beneath which the body is then interred. In some other places[3] it suffices to mark a cross upon the stone with the victim's blood. In the same district the practice of taking auspices from the victim—from the shoulder-blade in the case of a ram and from the breast-bone in the case of a cock—is occasionally combined with the sacrifice, but is not essential to the ceremony.

But animals, though they are the only victims actually slaughtered upon the spot, are not the only form of peace-offering. Even at the present day when, added to the power of the law, a sense of humanity, or a fear of being pronounced 'uncivilised,' tends to deter the peasantry even of the most outlying districts from actually satisfying the more savage instincts of hereditary superstition, there still exists a strong feeling that a human victim is preferable to an animal for ensuring the stability of a building. Fortunately therefore for the builder's peace of mind, the principles of sympathetic magic offer a compromise between actual murder and total disregard of the traditional rite. It suffices to obtain from a man or woman—an enemy for choice but, failing that, 'out of philanthropy' as a Greek authority puts it, any aged person whose term of life is well-nigh done—some such object as a hair or the paring of a nail, or again a shred of his clothing or a cast-off shoe, or it may be a thread or stick[4] marked with the

[1] So Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 196. Ἰατρίδης, Συλλογὴ δημοτ. ἀσμάτων, p. 93, mentions also a dog.

[2] So also in Zacynthos and Cephalonia. Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 196.

[3] e.g. in Cimolus, Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 45.

[4] Cf. Ricaut, *Hist. de l'église grecque*, pp. 369—70.

measure either of the footprint or of the full stature of the person, and to bury it beneath the foundation-stone of the new edifice. By this proceeding a human victim is devoted to the *genius* of the site, and will die within the year as surely as if an image of him were moulded in wax and a needle run through its heart. Another variation of the same rite consists in enticing some passer-by to the spot and laying the foundation-stone upon his shadow. In Santorini I myself was once saved from such a fate by the rough benevolence of a stranger who dragged me back from the place where I was standing and adjured me to watch the proceedings from the other side of the trench where my shadow could not fall across the foundations. Nor are the invited guests immune; unenviable therefore is the position of those persons who are officially required to assist at the laying of the foundation-stones of churches and other public buildings. The demarch (or mayor) of Agrinion informed me that, according to the belief of the common-folk in the neighbourhood, his four immediate predecessors in office had all fallen victims to this their public duty; and he described to me the concern and consternation of his own women-folk when he himself had recently braved the ordeal. He honestly allowed too that he had kept his shadow clear of the dangerous spot.

So much importance is attached to these foundation-ceremonies that the Church has provided a special office to be read alike for cathedral or for cottage; and the priest who attends for this purpose is sometimes induced to pronounce a blessing on the animal that is to be sacrificed. This however is the more expensive rite; the victim has to be bought, and the priest expects a fee for blessing it; whereas the immolation of a shadow-victim costs nothing, is more efficacious as being equivalent to a human sacrifice, and provides an excellent means for removing an enemy with impunity.

The sacrificial ceremony is also sometimes performed on other occasions than those of the laying of foundation-stones. In Athens a precept of popular wisdom enjoins the slaughtering of a black cock when a new quarry is opened[1]; and an interesting account is given by Bent[2] of a similar scene at the launching of a ship

[1] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. III. p. 148.
[2] *The Cyclades*, p. 132.

in Santorini. 'When they have built a new vessel, they have a grand ceremony at the launching, or benediction, as they call it here, at which the priest officiates; and the crowd eagerly watch, as she glides into the water, the position she takes, for an omen is attached to this. It is customary to slaughter an ox, a lamb or a dove on these occasions, according to the wealth of the proprietor and the size of the ship, and with the blood to make a cross on the deck. After this the captain jumps off the bows into the sea with all his clothes on, and the ceremony is followed by a banquet and much rejoicing.' Here it is reasonable to suppose that the captain by jumping into the sea goes through the form of offering himself as a sacrifice to the *genius* of the sea, and that the animal actually slaughtered is a surrogate victim in his stead.

The strength of these superstitions to-day, as gauged by the shifts and compromises to which the peasants resort in order to satisfy their scruples, goes far to guarantee the historical accuracy of such ballads as 'the Bridge of Arta.' Not of course that each of the numerous versions with all its local colouring is to be taken as evidence of human sacrifice in each place named; exactitude of detail cannot be claimed for them. But as a faithful picture of the beliefs and customs prevalent not more perhaps than two or three centuries ago they deserve full credence. Both the wide dispersion of the several versions, and also the skill with which in each of them the action of the master-builder evokes feelings not of aversion but rather of pity for a man of whom religious duty demanded the sacrifice of his own wife, furnish plain proof of the domination which the superstition in its most gruesome form once exercised; and the intentions of the modern peasants, if not their acts, testify to the same overwhelming dread of *genii*.

That the ceremonies which I have described are in general of the nature of sacrifices to *genii* is beyond question. In the version of 'the Bridge of Arta' which I have translated, both the *genius* and the victim whom he demands appear as *dramatis personae*. Again, in some districts the word 'sacrifice' (*θυσιό*[1] or *θυσία*[2]) is actually still applied to the rite. Finally, though

[1] Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 138.
[2] Ricaut, *Hist. de l'église grecque*, p. 367 (from Πολίτης, *ibid.*).

the victims are of various kinds and the forms in which a *genius* may appear equally various, the distinction between the two is as a rule kept clear; cases of a single species of animal serving for both *genius* and victim—of the *genius* for example appearing as a cock or of the chosen victim being a snake—are extremely rare.

Confusion of the two nevertheless does occur; the original *genius* of the site is sometimes forgotten, and the victim is conceived to be slain and buried in order that from the under-world it may exercise a guardianship over the building which is its tomb. Thus in one version of 'the Bridge of Arta,' inferior in many respects to that which I have translated, the complaint of the master-craftsman's wife contains the line

*τρεῖς ἀδερφούλαις εἴμασταν, ταὶς τρεῖς στοιχειὰ μᾶς βάλαν*[1],
'Three sisters we, and all the three they took for guardian-demons.'

Probably the same confusion of thought was responsible for the representation of the *genius* of a church in Athens in the shape of a cock, which is the commonest kind of victim; and possibly too the bulls which are so frequently the guardians of churches were originally the victims considered most suitable for the foundation of such important edifices. This error of belief has undoubtedly been facilitated by the use of a word which in its mediaeval meanings has already been discussed—the verb *στοιχειόνω*. This, as I have pointed out, meant strictly 'to provide (a place or object) with a *genius*.' But in modern usage it can take an accusative of the victim devoted to a *genius* no less than of the place provided with a *genius*. In Zacynthos and Cephalonia, says Bernhard Schmidt[2], the phrase *στοιχειόνω ἀρνί*, for example, meaning 'I devote a lamb' to the *genius*, is in regular use; and so too in the above rendering of 'the Bridge of Arta,' the phrase which I have translated 'an ye devote not human life' is in the Greek *ἂν δὲ στοιχειώσετ' ἄνθρωπο*. Now verbs of this form are in both ancient and modern Greek usually causative. The ancient *δηλόω* and modern *δηλόνω* mean 'I make (an object) clear' (*δῆλος*): the ancient *χρυσόω* and modern *χρυσόνω* mean 'I make (an object) gold' (*χρυσός*). Similarly *στοιχειόνω* is

[1] Ἰατρίδης, Συλλογὴ δημοτ. ἀσμάτων, p. 28.
[2] *Das Volksleben*, p. 196, note 2.

readily taken to mean 'I make (an animal or person) the *genius*' (στοιχεῖον) of a place. If therefore this word continued to be applied to the rite of slaughtering an animal at foundation-ceremonies in any place where the true purport of the custom, as often happens, had been forgotten, language itself would at once suggest that erroneous interpretation of the custom of which we have seen examples; the victim would be raised to the rank of *genius*.

This development of modern superstition supplies a clue for tracing the evolution of ancient Greek religion, which has hitherto been missed by those who have dealt with the subject[1]. They have generally compared with the modern Greek superstition similar beliefs and customs prevalent throughout the Balkans and even beyond them, and have thence inferred that the practice of sacrificing to the *genii* of sites selected for building was of Slavonic importation. The wide distribution of the superstition in the Balkans, especially among the Slavonic peoples, is a fact; but the inference goes too far. To Slavonic influence I impute the recrudescence of the superstition in its most barbarous form, involving human sacrifice, during the Middle Ages. Ancient history, even ancient mythology, contains no story so suggestive of barbarity as one brief statement made by Suidas: 'At St Mamas there was a large bridge consisting of twelve arches (for there was much water coming down), and there a brazen dragon was set up, because it was thought that a dragon inhabited the place; and there many maidens were sacrificed[2].' The date of the events to which the passage refers cannot be ascertained; but I certainly suspect it to be subsequent to the Slavonic invasion of Greece. Yet even so the Slavs did not initiate a new custom but merely stimulated the native belief that *genii* required sacrifice in compensation for the building of any edifice on their domains. This belief dated from the Homeric age—nay, was already old when the Achaeans built their great

[1] Since this was written, a new work of Prof. Polites (Μελέται περὶ τοῦ βίου καὶ τῆς γλώσσης τοῦ Ἑλληνικοῦ λαοῦ, Παραδόσεις) has come into my hands, and I find that he has modified his views. Cf. below, pp. 272–3, where I insert a suggestion made by Polites, *op. cit.* II. p. 1089.

[2] Suidas, Λεξικόν, s.v. Μάμας. The statement is corroborated by Codinus, περὶ θεαμάτων, p. 30, who adds to the human victims 'multitudes of sheep and oxen and fowls.' From Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 141, note 1.

wall with lofty towers, a bulwark for them and their ships against the men of Ilium.

'Thus,' we read, 'did they labour, even the long-haired Achaeans; but the gods sitting beside Zeus that wieldeth the lightning gazed in wonder on the mighty work of the bronze-clad Achaeans. And to them did Poseidon the earth-shaker open speech: "Father Zeus, is there now one mortal on the boundless earth, that will henceforth declare unto immortals his mind and purpose? Seest thou not that contrariwise the long-haired Achaeans have built a wall to guard their ships and driven a trench about it, and have not offered unto the gods fair sacrifice? Verily their wall shall be famed far as Dawn spreads her light; and that which I with Phoebus Apollo toiled to build for the hero Laomedon will men forget." And unto him spake Zeus that gathereth the clouds, sore-vexed: "Fie on thee, thou earth-shaker whose sway is wide, for this thy word. Well might this device of men dismay some other god lesser than thou by far in work and will; but thou verily shalt be famed far as Dawn spreads her light. Go to; when the long-haired Achaeans be gone again with their ships unto their own native land, break thou down their wall and cast it all into the sea and cover again the vast shore with sand, that so the Achaeans' great wall may be wiped out from thy sight[1]."' And later in the *Iliad* we read of the fulfilment; how that the rivers of the Trojan land were marshalled and led by Poseidon, his trident in his hands, to the assault of the wall that 'had been fashioned without the will of the gods and could no long time endure[2].'

The whole passage finds its best commentary in modern superstition. Poseidon, though a great god, is the local *genius*; to him belongs the shore where the Greek ships are assembled, to him too the land where he had built the town of Ilium; to him therefore were due sacrifices for the building of the wall. But the god whose fame is known far as Dawn spreads her light deserves the rebuke administered by Zeus for his pettiness of spirit. An ordinary local *genius*, 'some god far lesser than he in work and will,' might justly wax wrathful at the neglect of his more limited prerogatives. Yet even so the wall was

[1] Hom. *Il.* VII. 442 ff.

[2] Hom. *Il.* XII. 3—33.

doomed to endure no long time. Then as now the divine law ran, 'An ye devote not hecatombs, no wall hath sure foundation.'

In this passage there is of course no suggestion of a local *genius* in animal shape; the anthropomorphic tendency of Homeric religion was too strong to admit of that. But since we know from Theophrastus' sketch of the superstitious man and from other sources that in the classical age *genii* of houses and temples were believed to appear in the form of snakes, we may without hesitation assign the same belief to earlier ages. Such a superstition could not in the nature of things have sprung up after an anthropomorphic conception of the gods dominated all religion, but must necessarily have been a survival from pre-classical and pre-Homeric folklore.

But, though Homer speaks of the *genius* only as a 'lesser god' without further description, he implies clearly that the present custom of doing sacrifice to such a being for the foundation of any building was then in existence. Did the sacrifice ever involve human victims? A positive and certain answer cannot, I suppose, be made; but bearing in mind the many ancient traditions of human sacrifice in Greece and even the occasional continuance of the practice in the most civilised and enlightened age[1] I cannot doubt it. I suspect that, if we could obtain an earlier version of the story of Iphigenia than has come down to us, we should find that the wrath of Artemis had no part in it, but that human sacrifice was offered to the Winds or other *genii* of the air—that the 'maiden's blood' was, in the words of Aeschylus, 'a sacrifice to stay the winds[2],' 'a charm to lull the Thracian blasts[3],' that and nothing more. But a story still more strongly evidential of the custom is told by Pausanias[4]. In the war between Messenia and Sparta, when the Messenians had been reduced to extremities, 'they decided to evacuate all their many towns in the open country and to establish themselves on Mount Ithome. Now there was there a town of no great size, which Homer, they say, includes in the Catalogue—"Ithome steep as a ladder." In this town they established themselves, extending its ancient circuit so as to provide a stronghold large enough for all. And apart even from the fortifications the place was strong; for Ithome is as high

[1] See below, p. 273.
[2] *Agam.* 214.
[3] *Agam.* 1418.
[4] IV. 9. 1—5.

as any mountain in the Peloponnese and, where the town lay, was particularly inaccessible. They determined also to send an envoy to Delphi,' who brought them back the following oracle:

> A maiden pure unto the nether powers,
> Chosen by lot, of lineage Aepytid,
> Ye shall devote in sacrifice by night.
> But if ye fail thereof, take ye a maid
> E'en from a man of other race as victim,
> An he shall give her willingly to slay.

And the story goes on to tell how in the end Aristodemus devoted his own daughter, and she became the accepted victim.

Here Pausanias, it will be noticed, does not give any reason for the sacrifice being required. But three points in his narrative are highly suggestive. The story of the sacrifice follows immediately upon the mention of the building of new fortifications—and the foundation of what was to be practically a new city was eminently a question on which to consult the Delphic oracle; the powers to whom sacrifice is ordered are designated merely as *νέρτεροι δαίμονες*, the nearest equivalent in ancient Greek to *genii*; and the time of the sacrifice is to be night, when, according to modern belief, *genii* are most active. If then modern superstition can ever teach us anything about ancient religion, it supplies the clue here. The maiden was to be sacrificed to the *genii* of Mount Ithome to ensure the stability of the new fortifications.

Now if my interpretation of this story is right and the practice of human sacrifice to *genii* was known in ancient Greece, the transition from the worship of *genii* in the form of snakes or dragons to the worship of tutelary heroes or gods in human likeness is readily explained on the analogy of a similar transition in modern belief. What was originally the victim was mistaken for the genius. The same confusion of thought, by which, in one version of 'the Bridge of Arta,' the *genius* in person demands a human victim and yet afterwards the victim speaks of herself as becoming the *genius* of the bridge, can be detected even in the oracle given to the Messenians. 'If ye fail to find a maid of the blood of the Aepytidae,' it said, 'ye may take the daughter of a man of other lineage, provided that he give her willingly for sacrifice.' Why the condition? Why 'willingly' only? Because, I think,

even the Delphic oracle halted between two opinions—between the conception of the maiden as a victim to appease angry *genii* and the belief that the dead girl herself would become the guardian-*daemon* of the stronghold.

Let us read another story from Pausanias[1]: 'At the base of Mount Cronius, on the north side (of the Altis at Olympia), between the treasuries and the mountain, there is a sanctuary of Ilithyia, and in it Sosipolis, a native *daemon* of Elis, is worshipped. To Ilithyia they give the surname "Olympian," and elect a priestess to minister to her year by year. The old woman too who waits upon Sosipolis is bound by Elean custom to chastity in her own person, and brings water for the bathing of the god and serves him with barley-cakes kneaded with honey. In the front part of the temple, which is of double construction, is an altar of Ilithyia, and entrance thereto is public; but in the inner part Sosipolis is worshipped, and only the woman who serves the god may enter, and she only with her head and face covered by a white veil. And while she does so, maidens and married women wait in the temple of Ilithyia and sing a hymn; incense of all sorts is also offered to him, but no libations of wine. An oath also at the sanctuary of Sosipolis is taken on very great occasions.

'It is said that when the Arcadians had once invaded Elis, and the Eleans lay encamped opposite to them, a woman came to the generals of the Eleans, with a child at her breast, and said that, though she was the mother of the child, she offered it, bidden thereto by dreams, to fight on the side of the Eleans. And those in command, trusting the woman's tale, put the child in the fore-front of the army naked. Then the Arcadians came to the attack, and lo! straightway the child was changed into a serpent. And the Arcadians, dismayed at the sight, turned to flight, and were pressed by the Eleans, who won a signal victory and gave to the god the name of Sosipolis ("saviour of the state"). And at the place where the serpent disappeared in the ground after the battle they set up the sanctuary; and along with him they took to worshipping Ilithyia, because she was the goddess who had brought the boy into the world.'

Is this story complete, or did Pausanias' informants suppress one material point out of shame? How came a mortal infant

[1] VI. 20. 2—5.

to assume the form of a serpent which is proper only to apparitions from the lower world? The missing episode is, I believe, the sacrifice of the child, which having been offered willingly became after death a *daemon* friendly to the Eleans and fought, in the form of a serpent, on their side. Human sacrifice before a battle was not unknown in ancient Greece[1], but by Pausanias' time the inhabitants of Elis might well have hesitated to impute to their forefathers so barbarous a custom, and have modified the story by omitting even that incident which alone could make it harmonise with ancient religious ideas[2].

A similar view has been taken of another story of Pausanias[3], also from Elis. 'Oxylus (the king of Elis), they say, had two sons Aetolus and Laias. Aetolus died before his parents and was buried by them in a tomb which they caused to be made exactly in the gate of the road to Olympia and the sanctuary of Zeus. The cause of their burying him thus was an oracle which forbade the corpse to be either within or without the city. And up to my time the governor of the gymnasium still makes annual offerings to Aetolus as a hero.' Commenting on this passage Dr Frazer[4] says, 'The spirit of the dead man was probably expected to guard the gate against foes.... It is possible that in this story of the burial of Aetolus in the gate we have a faded tradition of an actual human sacrifice offered when the gate was built.' Certainly the facts that Aetolus was young and that he was not head of the royal house make his elevation to the rank of tutelary hero after death difficult to understand on any other hypothesis; and it should be noted too that the oracle, in obedience to which his tomb was made in the gateway, probably came, as the preceding context suggests, from Delphi, that same shrine which was responsible for the sacrifice of Aristodemus' daughter in the Messenian war.

Thus there is some probability that in ancient, as in modern, Greece the *genius* was sometimes superseded by the victim offered to him, but bequeathed to his successor something of his own character. The victim, now become a hero, manifested himself

[1] Porphyrius, *De abstinentia*, II. 56. Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 13.
[2] This view of the story I take from Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, II. p. 1089.
[3] v. 4. 4.
[4] *Pausanias' Description of Greece*, III. p. 468.

in the old-established guise of a serpent, and, if we may judge from the case of Sosipolis at Olympia, continued to be fed with honey-cakes, the same food which had been considered the appropriate diet for the original snake-*genii* such as those dwelling in the Erechtheum. But, when once the transition of worship was well advanced, the power to assume serpent-form was naturally extended to all tutelary heroes and even to gods; to have been sacrificed was no longer the sole qualifying condition. The hero Cychreus went to the help of the Athenians at Salamis in the form of a serpent[1]. Two serpents were the incarnations of the heroes Trophonius and Agamedes at the oracle of Lebadea[2]. Amphiaraus was represented by a snake on the coins of Oropus. An archaic relief of the sixth century B.C. in the Museum of Sparta, to which Miss Harrison has recently called attention, represents 'a male and a female figure seated side by side on a great throne-like chair.... Worshippers of diminutive size approach with offerings—a cock and some object that may be a cake, an egg, or a fruit.... It is clear that we have...representations of the dead, but the dead conceived of as half-divine, as heroized—hence their large size as compared with that of their worshipping descendants. They are κρείττονες, "Better and Stronger Ones." The artist of the relief is determined to make his meaning clear. Behind the chair, equal in height to the seated figures, is a great curled snake, but a snake strangely fashioned. From the edge of his lower lip hangs down a long beard, a decoration denied by nature. The intention is clear; he is a *human* snake, the vehicle, the incarnation of the dead man's ghost[3].'

In this relief the offerings depicted also are, I think, no less instructive than the bearded snake. If we may suppose that the somewhat indeterminate object, cake, egg, or fruit, was intended for a honey-cake, the offerings combine that which was the accustomed food of snake-*genii* in ancient times with a cock, the victim most frequently sacrificed to the same *genii* at the present day.

Of gods, Asclepius, perhaps because he began life as a hero, was most frequently represented in serpent-form. It was in this

[1] Pausanias, I. 26. 1.
[2] Schol. ad Aristoph. *Nubes*, 508.
[3] Miss Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 327 ff.

guise that he came to Sicyon, Epidaurus Limera, and Rome[1]; and in later times Lucian tells a humorous tale of how an impostor effected by trickery a supposed re-incarnation of Asclepius in snake-form before the very eyes of the people out of whose superstitions he made a living and indeed a fortune[2]. Here again, if we may argue from modern custom, the serpent-form carried with it the traditional offering of a 'cock to Asclepius.' But other gods too had sometimes their attendant snakes, as had Asclepius at Epidaurus; and in every case it is likely that the particular god had originally dispossessed a primitive snake-*genius*, but inherited from him and retained for a time in local cults the form of a snake; until, as the conception of the gods became more and more anthropomorphic, the snake ceased to be a manifestation of the god himself and became merely his minister or his symbol. Even Zeus himself, under the title of Meilichios, is proved by two reliefs found at the Piraeus to have been figured for a time by his worshippers as a snake[3].

In many such cases doubtless the substitution of the cult of a new and named god for that of a primitive and nameless *genius* explains adequately the incomer's inheritance and temporary retention of the snake-form; but in the case of tutelary heroes, above all, the analogy of modern folk-lore, in which the human victim is sometimes erroneously elevated to the rank of guardian-*genius*, supplies, I think, the right clue to the process by which in ancient times the snake came to be the recognised incarnation of the spirits of dead men and heroes.

The *genii* of water, to whom we now turn, are sometimes imagined in the form of dragons or of bulls, but more often by far in human or quasi-human shape. An exception to the general rule must of course be made in the case of the *genii* of bridges, if, as I suppose, they were originally identical with the *genii* of those rivers which the bridges span; for these, as I have said, are usually dragons. But if in this case there is a difference in outward appearance, there is a general agreement at any rate in

[1] See Roscher, *Lexicon d. Mythol.* I. 2468 ff.
[2] Lucian, *Alexander vel Pseudomantis*, cap. XIV.
[3] See Miss Jane Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 17—20, where the two reliefs in question are reproduced.

characteristics; for the *genii* of water are no less hostile to man than those who demand human sacrifice as the price of their permission to build a bridge.

At Kephalóvryso in Aetolia the *genii* of a river were described to me as red, grinning devils who might often be seen sitting in the bed of the stream beneath the water. They were believed to mate with *Lamiae* who infested several caves on the bank of the river; and together these two kinds of monster would feed on the bodies of men whom they had dragged into the river and drowned.

But far more frequently the *genii* of water, and especially of wells, appear in the form of Arabs (Αράπηδες), and may be seen sometimes smoking long pipes in the depths. They have the power of transforming themselves into any shape. At one time they assume dragon-form and terrorise a whole country side; at another they adopt the guise of a lovely maiden weeping beside a well, and, on pretence of having dropped into it a ring, induce gallant and unwary men to descend to their death[1]; for when once the Arab has entrapped them in his well he feeds upon them or smokes them in lieu of tobacco in his pipe.

How Arabs have come to find a place among the *genii* of modern Greece is a question which must be answered in one of two ways. Either during the Turkish domination of Greece the Arab slaves, who were to be found in every wealthy house, were suspected by the Christian population of possessing magical powers, and, from being magicians were elevated, as the *Striges* often were in mediaeval and modern Greece, to the rank of demons; or else they are another example of the transmutation of victims into *genii*. For several reasons I incline to the latter explanation. First, these Arabs are most commonly associated with wells, and for the sinking of a well, no less than for the erection of a building or the opening of a quarry, a victim would naturally be required. Secondly, an animal victim is for choice of a black or dark colour, and, by parity of reasoning, among human victims an Arab (or other man of dark colour, for the word Arab is used popularly of all such) would be preferable to a white man. Thirdly, it was reported from Zacynthos only a generation ago that a strong

[1] For ballads dealing with this theme, see Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 133, and Ἀραβάντινος, Συλλογὴ δημωδῶν ἀσμάτων τῆς Ἠπείρου, no. 451.

feeling still existed there in favour of sacrificing a Mohammedan or a Jew at the foundation of important bridges and other buildings[1]; and there is a legend of a black man having been actually immured in the bridge of an aqueduct near Lebadea in Boeotia[2]. Lastly, I heard from a shepherd belonging to Chios the story of a house in that island haunted by beings whom he called indifferently Arabs[3] and *vrykólakes*. He himself had been mad for eight months from the shock of seeing them, and four of his friends who visited the house to discover the cause of his disaster were similarly afflicted. The demons were finally laid to rest by an old man driving a flock of goats through the house[4]. Now *vrykólakes*, with whom I shall deal at length later on, are persons resuscitated after death who issue from their graves; and among those who are predisposed to such reappearance are men who have met with a violent death. The identification therefore of Arabs with *vrykólakes* in this story suggests that an Arab victim sacrificed at the foundation of some building might become the *genius* of it—not in this case the beneficent guardian of it, but owing to his violent death a malicious and hurtful monster. On this evidence I incline to the view that the Arabs who now form a class of *genii* were originally the human victims preferred at the sinking of wells—a piece of engineering, it must be remembered, of first-rate importance in a country as dry as Greece—and that, when once these *genii* had become associated with water, the popular imagination soon assigned them to rivers and natural springs no less than to wells.

The *genii* of rivers sometimes appear also in the shape of bulls, though as I have already remarked this type of *genius* is far more commonly associated with churches. Possibly in some cases the fact that the church was built in the neighbourhood of some sacred spring, whose miraculous virtue was of older date and repute than Christianity, first caused the transference; but at any rate some rivers still retain this type of *genius*, the type under which river gods were regularly represented in ancient times. In this

[1] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 197.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 198.
[3] He used a neuter form, τὰ ἀράπια, which I have not found elsewhere.
[4] A similar method of laying *vrykólakes* is reported from Samos by Πολίτης (Παραδόσεις, I. 580). In this case a wizard 'took three calves born at one birth and drove them three times round the churchyard, saying some magic words.'

connexion a story entitled 'the ox-headed man[1]' and narrated to me at Goniá in the island of Santorini deserves mention.

A princess and a poor girl once agreed that when they were married, if of their respective first-born the one should be a boy and the other a girl, these two should be married. Now, as it chanced, princess and peasant-maid were both wed on the same day, but for a long time both remained childless. Then at last they prayed to the Panagia, the princess for a child even if it were but a girl, the peasant for a son even if he were but half a man; and their prayers were answered; for the poor woman bore a son with the head of an ox, while the princess was blest with a beautiful daughter.

When the two children were grown up, the poor woman went one day to claim the fulfilment of the agreement, and the princess, or rather now the queen, went to ask her husband. He however objected to the suitor on the grounds of personal appearance, and stipulated that he should at least first perform certain feats to prove his worthiness. The first task was to build a palace of pearls, the second to plant the highest mountain of Santorini (*μέσο βουνί*, 'central mountain,' as it is locally called) with trees, and the third to border all the roads of the island with flowers. For each labour one single night was the limit of time. But the ox-headed man was equal to the work, and having accomplished it came riding on a white horse to claim his bride. The king however, who had imposed these three labours in full assurance that the unseemly suitor would fail, now flatly refused to abide by his promise, and the man retired disconsolate and disappeared none knew whither.

The young princess was much affected at the unfair treatment of her lover, and each day she grew more and more melancholy. But finally she hit upon a means of cheering herself. She proposed to her father that they should leave the palace and start an inn, not for money, but for the sake of the amusement to be derived from the stories and witty sayings of the guests. The king consented, and the inn was set up.

Now one day a boy who had been fishing dropped his rod into the river, and having dived in after it came to a flight of stairs at

[1] *ὁ βῳδοκέφαλας*. The story as I give it is not a verbatim report of what I heard; as usual, I had to rely on my memory at the time and make notes afterwards.

the bottom. Having walked down forty steps, he entered a large room where sat the ox-headed man, who talked with him and told him that he was waiting there for a princess who came not. The boy then returned without hurt, and on his way home had to pass the inn. Having turned in there, he was asked by the princess to tell her something amusing. He replied however that he knew no stories, but would recount to her an adventure which had just befallen him. In the course of the story the princess recognised that what the boy called the *genius* of the river (*τὸ στοιχειὸ τοῦ ποταμοῦ*) could be no other than her lover, and having been straightway conducted to the spot, found and married the ox-headed man, and in his palace under the river lived happily ever afterwards—"but" (as Greek fairy-tales often end) "we here much more happily."

It is curious that Santorini of all places should be the source of this story; for the island does not possess a stream. Locally however certain gullies by which the island is intersected are known as rivers (*ποταμοί*)[1], and after unusually heavy rain they might perhaps form torrents; at any rate one known as 'the evil river' (*ὁ κακὸς ποταμός*) is frequently mentioned in popular traditions as a real river. Possibly the tradition is accurate; for the volcanic nature of the island would readily account for the disappearance of a single stream[2]. But the importance of the story lies in the mention of an ox-headed man as *genius* of a river. The fact that he is made the son of a peasant-woman need not concern us; the first part of the story is probably adapted from some other folk-tale with a view to account for the wooing of a princess by so ill-favoured a suitor. In the latter part we have a more ancient *motif*, the wedding of a mortal maid with a river-god. If only it were mentioned in this tale that, besides the power of performing miraculous tasks, the bull-headed man had the faculty, which modern *genii* possess, of transforming himself into other shapes, we should have a complete parallel (save in the princess' willingness to wed) with the wooing

[1] This is the form which I heard used constantly in the island instead of the more common *ποτάμι* (*τὸ*).

[2] This however must have been prior to the middle of the 17th century; for a history of the island published in 1657 says, 'cette Isle . . n'est arrousée d'aucun ruisseau ou fontaine.' Père François Richard, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Santorini*, p. 35.

of Deianira by the river-god Achelous; "for he," says she, "in treble shapes kept seeking me from my sire, coming now in true bull-form, now as a coiling serpent of gleaming hues, anon with human trunk and head of ox[1]." The *genii* of rivers have not, it would seem, changed their forms and attributes, save for the admission of Arabs to their number, from the age of Sophocles to this day.

The third class of *genius* which we have to notice is terrestrial, inhabiting mountains, rocks, caves, and any other grim and desolate places. These *genii* are the most frequent of all, and are known as dragons. Not of course that all dragons are terrestrial; the dragon-form has already been mentioned among the forms proper to the *genii* of springs and wells, and also as a shape assumed at will by the Arabs who more frequently occupy those haunts. But terrestrial *genii*, in whatever place they make their lair—and no limit can be set to such places—are far most commonly pictured as dragons; and I have therefore preferred to speak of the dragons in general here, rather than among the *genii* of either buildings or water.

The term δράκος or δράκοντας[2] indicates to the Greek peasant a monster of no more determinate shape than does the word 'dragon' to ourselves. The Greek word however differs, and has always differed, from the English form of it in one respect, namely that it is often employed in a strict and narrow sense to denote a 'serpent' as distinguished from a small snake (in modern Greek φίδι, i.e. ὀφίδιον, the diminutive of the ancient ὄφις). On the other hand, a Greek 'dragon,' in the widest sense of the term, is sometimes distinctly anthropomorphic in popular stories, and is made to boil kettles and drink coffee without any sense of impropriety. It is in fact only from the context of a story that it is possible to determine in what shape the dragon is imagined; in general it is neither flesh nor fowl nor good red devil; heads and tails, wings and legs, teeth and talons, are assigned to it in any number and variety; it breathes air and fire indifferently; it sleeps with its eyes open and sees with them shut; it makes

[1] Soph. *Trach.* 10 ff.

[2] Formed from the ancient δράκων as Χάρος and Χάροντας from Χάρων. Cf. above, p. 98. There is a feminine δρακόντισσα or δράκισσα.

war on men and love to women; it roars or it sings, and there is little to choose between the two performances; for the lapse of centuries, it seems, has in no wise mellowed its voice[1]. The stories of the common-folk are full of these monsters' savagery and treachery[2]; for it is the dragons, above all other supernatural beings, who provide the wandering hero of the fairy-tales with befitting adventures and tests of prowess.

A common *motif* of such stories is provided by the belief that dragons are the guardians of buried treasure. When a man in a dream has had revealed to him the whereabouts of buried treasure, his right course is to go to the spot without breathing to anyone a hint of his secret, and there to slay a cock or other animal such as is offered at the laying of foundation-stones, in order to appease the *genius* (which is almost always a dragon, though an Arab is occasionally substituted) before he ventures to disturb the soil. This is the very superstition which Artemidorus had in mind when he interpreted dreams about dragons to denote 'wealth and riches, because dragons make their fixed abode over treasures[3].' Having complied with these conditions the digger may hope to bring gold to light; but if he have previously betrayed to anyone his expectations or have failed to propitiate the dragon, the old proverb is fulfilled, *ἄνθρακες ὁ θησαυρός*[4], his treasure turns out to be but ashes (*κάρβουνα*).

The guardianship likewise of gardens wherein flow 'immortal waters' or grows 'immortal fruit' is the province of dragons. In Tenos a typical story concerning them is told in several versions[5]. The hero of them all bears the name of *Γιαννάκης* or 'Jack' (a familiar diminutive of *Ἰωάννης*, 'John')—a name commonly given in Greek fairy-tales to the performer of Heraclean feats.

[1] Cf. Philostr. *Vit. Apollon.* III. 8. Aelian, *de natur. anim.* XVI. 39. Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 191.

[2] Only one variety of dragon, the *χαμοδράκι* or 'ground-dragon,' is often harmless. It is of pastoral tastes and consorts with the ewes and she-goats, and is more noted among the shepherds for its lasciviousness than for any other quality.

[3] Artem. *Oneirocr.* II. 13 (p. 101). Cf. Festus, 67, 13.

[4] Lucian, *Philopseudes*, cap. XXXII. Zenobius, *Cent.* II. 1. The same punishment is in one story inflicted by a Callicantzaros on a midwife who had deceived him into believing that his newborn child was male. After sending her away with a sackful of gold, he discovered her deceit, and on her arrival at home the gold had turned to ashes. See above, p. 199.

[5] *Ἀδαμάντιος Ἰ. Ἀδαμαντίου, Τηνιακά* (published first in *Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρίας τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Vol. V. pp. 277 sqq.).

The hero who, after discovering that his youngest sister is a Strigla, has fled with his mother, the queen, from the palace where they were in imminent danger of being devoured[1], comes to a castle occupied by forty dragons. The prince straightway attacks them single-handed and slays, so he thinks, all of them, but in reality one has only feigned to be dead and so escapes to a hole beneath the castle, of which Jack now becomes the master. The remaining dragon however ventures forth, when the prince is gone out to the chase, and makes love to the queen, and after a while dragon and queen knowing that the prince would be incensed at their intrigue conspire to kill him. To this end the queen on her son's return pretends to be ill, and in response to his enquiries tells him that the only thing that can heal her is 'immortal water[2],' which, as her paramour, the dragon, knows, is to be found only in a distant garden guarded by one or more other dragons. The prince at once undertakes to obtain the desired remedy, and is directed by a witch (who in some versions appears as the impersonation of his τύχη or 'Fortune') whither to go and how to deal with the dragons. These accordingly he slays or eludes, and so returns home unhurt bringing the immortal water. Then once more the dragon and the queen take counsel together, and the pretence of illness is repeated with a demand this time for some immortal fruit or herb[3] known to be guarded in the same way as the water; and once more the prince sets out and circumvents the dragons in some new fashion.

Between such stories and the ancient fable of Heracles' journey to the land of the Hesperides in search of the golden apples, and of his victory over the guardian-dragon Ladon, the connexion is self-evident. Whether that connexion is one of direct lineage, is less certain. More probably, I think, a form of this same story was already current in an age to which the name of Heracles was as unknown as that of the modern Jack; and just as the story of Peleus and Thetis became the classical example

[1] For the first half of this story, see above, p. 183.

[2] *ἀθάνατο νερό*, *op. cit.* pp. 299 and 315.

[3] e.g. *ἀθάνατα μῆλα*, 'immortal apples,' *op. cit.* pp. 311 and 316. *ἀθάνατο καρπούζι*, 'immortal water-melon,' pp. 297 and 315. *ἀθάνατο γαρούφαλο*, 'immortal gilly-flower,' p. 317. The translation of this last is correctly that which I have given, but the peasants all over Greece will call almost any bright and scented flower by this same name.

of the winning of a nymph to wife by a mortal man[1], so the myth, by which the exploit of bearing off wonderful fruit from the custody of a dragon was numbered among the labours of Heracles, is nothing more than the authorised version, so to speak, of a fairy-tale that might have been heard of winter-nights in Greek cottage-homes any time between the Pelasgian and the present age.

Daemons of the air, the fourth class of *genius* which we have to consider, have been acknowledged ever since the time of Hesiod and doubtless from a period far anterior to that. In his theology it was the lot of the first race of men in the golden age to become after death daemons 'clothed in air and going to and fro through all the world' as good guardians of mortal men. But the goodness which Hesiod attributes to the *genii* of the air was never, I suspect, an essential trait in their character. In Hesiod it is a corollary of the statement that they are the spirits of men who belonged to the golden age; but there is no reason to suppose that the common-folk ever regarded them as more beneficent than other gods and daemons. At any rate at the present day the ἀερικά, or *genii* of the air, are no better disposed towards mankind than any other supernatural beings.

Of this class as a whole little can be said. The word ἀερικό is applied to almost any apparition too vague and transient to be more clearly defined. It suggests something 'clothed in air,' something less tangible, less discernible, than most of the beings whom the peasant recognises and fears. The limits of its usage are hard to fix. It may properly include a Nereid whose passing through the air is the whirlwind, and it will equally certainly exclude a callicantzaros or a dragon. Yet even the Nereids are more substantial than the *genii* of the air in their truest form; for the assaults of Nereids upon men and women are made, as we have seen, from without[2], while *genii* of the air are more often supposed to 'possess' men in the same way as do devils, and to be liable to exorcism.

But, if the class as a whole is too vague and shadowy in the popular imagination to be capable of exact description, one

[1] See above, p. 137.
[2] Cf. above, pp. 143–4.

division of it is more clearly defined and has a generally acknowledged province of activity. These particular aërial *genii* are known as Telonia (τελώνια or, more rarely, τελωνεῖα). They cannot claim equal antiquity with some of their fellows, for they are, it would seem, a by-product of Christianity, with a certain accretion however of pagan superstition.

The origin of the name Telonia is not in dispute. It means frankly and plainly 'custom-houses.' Such is the bizarre materialism of the Greek imagination that the soul in its journeys no less than the body is believed to encounter the embarrassment of custom-houses. An institution which of all things mundane commands least sentiment and sympathy has actually found a place in popular theology. Many of the people indeed at the present day, as I know from enquiry, have ceased to connect their two usages of the word; but others accept as reasonable the belief that the soul in its voyage after death up from the earth to the presence of God must bear the scrutiny of aërial customs-officers.

But, apart from modern belief, the apotheosis of the *douane* is amply proved by passages cited by Du Cange[1] from early Christian authors. 'Some spirits,' says one[2], 'have been set on the earth, and some in the water, and others have been set in the air, even those that are called "aërial customs-officers" (ἐναέρια Τελώνια).' Another[3] speaks of 'the Judge and the prosecutions by the toll-collecting spirits.' Yet another[4] explains the belief in fuller detail: 'as men ascend, they find custom-houses guarding the way with great care and obstructing the soaring souls, each custom-house examining for one particular sin, one for deceit, another for envy, another for slander, and so on in order, each passion having its own inspectors and assessors[5].' Again a prayer for the use of the dying contains the same idea: 'Have mercy on me, all-holy angels of God Almighty, and save me from all evil Telonia, for I have no works to weigh against my wrong-doing[6].' Appeal in support of this belief was made

[1] *Glossar. med. et infim. Graecitatis* (p. 1541), s.v. τελώνιον.
[2] *Ibid.*, Damasc. Hierodiac. *Serm.* 3.
[3] *Ibid.*, Maximus Cythaer. Episc.
[4] *Ibid.*, Georg. Hamartolus.
[5] τελώνας καὶ διαλόγους (for which I read δικολόγους with Bern. Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 172).
[6] *Ibid.*, *Euchologium.*

even to the authority of Christ as given in the words, 'Thou fool, this night they require thy soul of thee[1],' where the commentators explained the vague plural as implying some such subject as 'toll-collectors' or 'custom-house officers[2].'

But the belief does not stop here. One does not pass the custom-houses of this world, or at any rate of Greece, without some expenditure in duty or in *douceur*; and the same apparently holds true of the celestial custom-houses. Hence in some places the belief has generated a practice, or, to speak more exactly, has breathed a new spirit into the old practice of providing the dead with money. My view of the origin of this practice has already been explained; I have given reasons for holding that the coin placed in the mouth of the dead was simply a charm to prevent evil spirits from entering, or the soul from re-entering, into the body, and that the interpretation of the custom, according to which the coin was the fee of the ferryman Charon, was of comparatively late date. At the present day Charon in the *rôle* of ferryman is almost forgotten; but in his place the Telonia seem locally to have become the recipients of the fee, and the old custom has thus received a second and equally erroneous explanation.

This may have been the idea in the mind of my informant who vaguely said that a coin placed in the mouth of the dead was 'good because of the aërial beings[3].' If the particular aërial beings whom he had in mind were the Telonia, he no doubt thought of the coin as a fee payable to them, though in that case it is somewhat strange that he should not have used the name which actually denotes their toll-collecting functions.

But from other sources at any rate comes evidence of a less ambiguous kind that the idea of paying the Telonia for passage is, or has been, a real motive in the minds of the peasantry. In Chios (where however the object actually placed in the mouth of the dead is clearly understood as a precaution against a devil entering the body) it is believed that the soul after death remains for forty days in the neighbourhood of its old habitation, the body, and then making its way to Hades has to pass the Telonia.

[1] Luke xii. 20.
[2] Du Cange, *ibid.* τελωνάρχαι, λογοθέται, πρακτοψηφισταί, etc.
[3] See above, p. 110.

Happy the soul that makes its voyage on Friday, for then the activities of the Telonia (who in the conception of the islanders are clearly evil spirits and not, as sometimes, the ministers of God) are restrained. But, to appease the Telonia and to ensure the safe passage of the soul, money is distributed to the poor[1]. The same usage obtains also at Sinasos in Cappadocia, and there the money so distributed is actually called τελωνιακά, 'duty paid at the customs[2].' The fact that in both these cases the money is now given in alms instead of being buried with the body is clearly a result of Christian influence; before that change was effected, it is reasonably likely that the widely-known practice of placing a coin in the mouth of the dead was explained in some places, though erroneously, by the belief that the dead must pay their way through the aërial custom-houses. The term περατίκι, 'passage-money,' by which, in the neighbourhood of Smyrna, is denoted the coin still in that district buried with the dead, has reference possibly to the same Telonia rather than to Charon[3].

Another and wholly different aspect of the Telonia concerns the living and not the dead, while it still exhibits them as true *genii* of the air. Any striking phenomena of the heavens at night, such as shooting-stars or comets, are believed to be manifestations of the Telonia[4]; but most dreaded of all is the phenomenon known to us as St Elmo's light, the flame that sometimes flickers in time of storm about the mast-head and yards. This light, the Greek sailor thinks, portends an immediate onset of malevolent aërial powers, whom he straightway tries to scare away by every means in his power, by invocation of saints and incantation against the demons, by firing of guns, and, best of all, by driving a black-handled knife (which is in the Cyclades thought doubly efficacious if an onion has recently been peeled with it) into the mast. For he no longer discriminates as did the Greek mariner of old; then the appearance of two such flames was greeted with gladness as a manifestation of the Dioscuri, the saviours from storm and tempest, and evil was portended only if there appeared a single flame, the token of Helena[5], who wrecked

[1] Κωνστ. Καιελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, pp. 362–3.
[2] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, ἡ Σινασός, p. 81. [3] See above, p. 109.
[4] Testimony to the same belief is cited by Du Cange (s.v. τελώνιον) from an anonymous astronomical work.
[5] For references see Preller, *Griech. Mythol.* II. 105–6.

as surely as her twin brothers guarded; now the phenomenon in any form bodes naught but ill. This change is probably due to Christian influences; the seaman no longer looks to any pagan power for succour in time of peril; he accounts St Nicholas his friend and saviour; and the Telonia, who in this province of their activity represent the older order of deities, have become by contrast man's enemies.

Other vague and incorrect usages of the term Telonia are also recorded. Sometimes it may be heard as a synonym for *δαιμόνια*, any non-Christian deities. In Myconos it is said to have been applied to the *genii* of springs[1]. In Athens men used to speak of Telonia of the sea, who like the Callicantzari were abroad only from Christmas until the blessing of the waters at Twelfth-night; and during this time ships were wont to be kept at anchor and secure from their attacks[2]. A belief is also mentioned by Pouqueville[3], in a very confused passage, that children who die unbaptised become Telonia; but the statement is corroborated by Bernhard Schmidt[4], who adduces information of the same belief existing in Zacynthos. The idea at the root of it probably was that unbaptised children could not pass the celestial customs, and were detained there on their road to the other world in order to assist in obstructing the passage of other souls. But these are local variations of the main belief, and, so far as I can see, are of little importance. In general the Telonia are a species of aërial *genius*, and their two activities consist in the collecting of dues from departed souls and assaults upon mariners.

There remain only for consideration the *genii* of human beings, or the attendant spirits to whom is committed in some way the guidance of men's lives. To some of them the name *genius* (i.e. *στοιχειό*) would hardly perhaps be extended by the peasants; but they all bear the same kind of relation towards men, and may therefore conveniently be grouped together for discussion.

The best example which I know of an acknowledged *genius*

[1] Villoison, *Annales des voyages*, II. p. 180, cited by B. Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 174, note 4.
[2] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθην. III. p. 166.
[3] *Voyage de la Grèce*, VI. p. 154.
[4] *Das Volksleben*, p. 173.

attached to a man is in a story in Hahn's collection[1], which tells of an old wizard whose life was bound up with that of a ten-headed snake which lived beneath a threshing-floor. Here the monstrous nature of the *genius* is doubtless intended to match the character of the wizard; ordinary men, unversed in magic, may have *genii* of a less complex pattern. Thus the snake which so commonly acts as *genius* to a house is also in many cases regarded as the *genius* of the head or some other member of the household. When therefore the death-struggle of any person is prolonged, this is sometimes set down to the unwillingness of the *genius* to permit his death; and in extreme cases of protracted agony recourse has before now been had to a priest, who, entering the sick man's room alone, reads a special prayer for the sufferer's release, and by virtue of this solemn office causes the house-snakes, who are pagan *genii*, to burst[2]. With their disruption of course the soul of the dying man is at once set free.

But the guardian spirits of whom the peasants most commonly speak belong to the *personnel* of Christian theology or demonology, and are therefore not actually numbered among *genii*. These are angels, two of whom are allotted to each man, the one good (ὁ καλὸς ἄγγελος) and the other bad (ὁ κακὸς ἄγγελος). But though the designation *genius* is not applied to them, in functions angels and *genii* do not differ. To them belongs the control of a man's life, the one guiding him in the way of righteousness, and the other diverting him to the pitfalls of vice. Their presence is ever constant, but seldom visible. Sometimes indeed, in stories at any rate, we hear of the good angel appearing to a man and rewarding him in his old age for a virtuous life[3]; and in general men born on Saturday, σαββατογεννημένοι, are reputed to be ἀλαφροστοίχειωτοι[4] and endowed with special powers of seeing and dealing with the supernatural. But most commonly the power to see the guardian angel is granted only to the dying, and the vision is a warning that the end is near. So, when the gaze of a dying man becomes abstracted and fixed, they say in some places βλέπει τὸν ἄγγελό του, or in one word ἀγγελοθωρεῖ[5], 'he sees his angel,' or again

[1] *Griech. März.* Vol. II. no. 64.
[2] Cf. Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηναίων, III. p. 77.
[3] Cf. above, p. 53.
[4] For this term see above, p. 204.
[5] B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 180.

ἀγγελοσκιάζεται[1], 'he is terrified of an angel.' In these expressions it is not clear which of the two angels is intended; but, to judge from other expressions, popular belief recognises the activity of the one or the other according to the peace or pain of the death. 'He is borne away by an angel,' ἀγγελοφορᾶται[2], suggests a quiet passing, as of Lazarus who was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom; while the word ἀγγελομαχεῖ, 'he is fighting with an angel,' an expression used in Laconia of a protracted death-struggle, and again ἀγγελοκρούσθηκε[3], 'he was stricken by an angel,' a term which denotes a sudden death, argue rather the presence of the evil angel.

Another kind of *genius* sometimes associated with men is the ἴσκιος (the modern form of σκιά), the 'shadow' personified. The phrase ἔχει καλὸ ἴσκιο, 'he has a good shadow,' is used of a man who enjoys good fortune, and he himself is described sometimes as καλοΐσκιωτος[4], 'good-shadowed,' that is, 'lucky.' But apparently a man may also get into trouble with this shadow no less than with an angel. The word ἰσκιοπατήθηκε, 'he has been trampled upon by his shadow[5],' is used occasionally of a man who has been stricken down by some sudden, but not necessarily fatal, illness such as epilepsy or paralysis. This personification of the shadow as *genius* is perhaps responsible in some measure for the fear which the peasant feels of having the foundation-stone of a building laid upon his shadow; but, as I have said above, the principle of sympathetic magic will explain the cause of fear without this supposition.

To these *genii* might reasonably be added the Fate (ἡ Μοῖρα or, more rarely, ἡ Τύχη) of each individual. But these lesser Fates, as well as the great Three, have already been discussed, and there is nothing to add here save that by virtue of the close connexion of each lesser Fate with the life of one man these too might be numbered among *genii*.

The same belief in a guardian-deity presiding over each human life is to be found throughout ancient Greek literature. In Homer the name for such a *genius* is Κήρ (at any rate if it be of an evil

[1] *Ibid.* note 6.
[2] *Op. cit.* p. 181.
[3] *Op. cit.* p. 181.
[4] *Op. cit.* p. 182.
[5] I cannot vouch for the accuracy of this translation. The word might possibly mean 'he has had his shadow trampled on,' and has been hurt indirectly through an injury inflicted upon his shadow-*genius*.

sort), in later writers δαίμων—both of them vague terms which embrace other kinds of deities as well, yet not so vague but that with the aid of context we can readily discover in them the equivalent of the 'guardian-angel' or other modern *genius*. From Homer onwards the word λαγχάνειν is regularly used of the allotment of each human life from the moment of birth to one of these guardians, and the belief in their attendance upon men throughout, and even after, life seems to have had general acceptance. In the *Iliad* the wraith of Patroclus is made to speak of the hateful *Ker* to whom he was allotted at the hour of birth[1], and the *Ker* here mentioned is not, I think, merely fate in the abstract but as truly a person as that baneful *Ker* of battle and carnage 'who wore about her shoulders a robe red with the blood of heroes[2].' After Homer the word δαίμων is preferred, but there is no change in the idea. The famous saying of Heraclitus, ἦθος ἀνθρώπῳ δαίμων, 'the god that guides man's lot is character,' is in no wise dark, but Plato throws even clearer light upon the popular belief in guardian-*daemons*. 'It is said that at each man's death his *daemon*, the *daemon* to whom he had been allotted for his lifetime, has the task of guiding him to some appointed place[3],' where the souls of men must assemble for judgement. Here the words 'it is said' indicate the popular source of the doctrine; and this is confirmed by another passage in which Plato[4] protests against the fatalism involved in the allotment of souls to particular *daemons*, and prefers to hold that the soul may choose its own guardian. Again in a fragment of Menander there is a simple statement of the belief in a form which robs fatalism of its gloom:

> Beside each man a daemon takes his stand
> E'en at his birth-hour, through life's mysteries
> A guide right good[5].

But there were others who did not take so cheerful a view, at any rate of their own guardian-deities; 'alas for the most cruel *daemon* to whom I am allotted[6]' is a complaint of a type by no

[1] Hom. *Il.* XXIII. 79.
[2] *Il.* XVIII. 535–8.
[3] Plato, *Phaedo*, p. 107 D.
[4] *Rep.* p. 617 D, E. Cf. 620 D, E.
[5] Meineke, *Fragm. Com. Graec.* IV. p. 238.
[6] Theocr. IV. 40.

means rare in Greek literature, and the word *κακοδαίμων* came as readily as *εὐδαίμων* to men's lips[1].

From these passages it is evident that in general each man was believed to have one, and only one, attendant *genius*, and his happiness or misery to depend on the character of the guardian allotted to him by fate. But sometimes this injustice of destiny was obviated by a belief similar to the modern belief in both good and bad angels in attendance on each man. The comment of Servius on Vergil's line, 'Quisque suos patimur manes[2],' sets forth this view: 'when we are born two *Genii* are allotted to us, one who exhorts us to good, the other who perverts us to evil.'

As in modern so in ancient times these *genii* were rarely visible to the men whom they guarded. The *genius* of Socrates, which, like those of other men past and present, had been, so he held, divinely appointed to wait upon him from his childhood onward[3], spoke to him indeed in a voice which he could hear[4] (just perhaps as the priestess of Delphi heard the voice of Apollo[5]), but ever remained unseen.

[1] I do not of course wish to imply that in the every-day usage of these words the thought of a guardian-*genius* was present to men's minds; but the first formation of them can only have sprung from this belief.

[2] *Aen.* VI. 743.

[3] Plato, *Theag.* 128 D.

[4] *Ibid.* E.

[5] Both Plato (*Apol.* 40 A) and Xenophon (*Mem.* I. 1. 2—4), compare Socrates' converse with his *genius* with *μαντική* or 'inspiration.'

# CHAPTER III.

## THE COMMUNION OF GODS AND MEN.

Ετι τοίνυν καὶ θυσίαι πᾶσαι καὶ οἷς μαντικὴ ἐπιστατεῖ—ταῦτα δ' ἐστὶν ἡ περὶ θεους τε καὶ ἀνθρώπους πρὸς ἀλλήλους κοινωνία—οὐ περὶ ἄλλο τί ἐστιν ἢ περὶ Ἔρωτος φυλακήν τε καὶ ἴασιν.

PLATO, *Symposium*, p. 188.

THE short sketch which has been given of the attitude of the Greek peasantry towards the Christian Godhead and all the host of assistant saints, and also the more detailed account of those pagan deities or demons whom the common-folk's awe, not unmingled with affection, has preserved from oblivion through so many centuries, have, I hope, justified the statement that the religion of Greece both is now, and—if a multitude of coincidences in the very minutiae of ancient and modern beliefs speak at all for the continuity of thought—from the dawn of Greek history onward through its brief bright noontide to its long-drawn dusk and night illumined even now only by borrowed lights has ever been, a form, and a little changed form, of polytheism.

Whatever be the merits and the demerits of such a religion in contrast with the worship of one almighty God, most thinkers will concede to it the property of bringing the divine element within more easy comprehension of the majority of mankind. Proper names, limited attributes, definite duties and spheres of work—these give a starting point from which the peasant can set out towards a conception of gods. He himself bears a name, he himself has qualities, he himself performs his round of work; and though his name be writ smaller than that of the being whom he strives to imagine—though his virtues and perhaps his vices be less pronouncedly white and black—though his daily task be more trivial—yet in one and all of these things he stands on common ground with his deities; they differ from him in degree

rather than in kind; he has but to picture a race of beings somewhat stronger and somewhat nobler than the foremost of his own fellow-men, and these whom he thus imagines are gods. A single spirit omniscient and omnipotent is too distant, too inaccessible from any known ground. Lack of the capacity to form or to grasp lofty ideals carries with it at least the compensation of closer intimacy with the supernatural and the divine.

It may therefore be expected that in the course of the intellectual and spiritual development of any primitive people, the more accurately they learn to measure their own imperfections and limitations, and the more imaginatively they magnify the wisdom and power of their gods, the wider and more impassable grows the chasm that divides mortal from immortal, human from divine; communion of man and god becomes less frequent, less direct. Such certainly was the experience of the Greek nation in some measure; but, owing probably to an innate and persistent vanity which at all times has made the race blind to its own failings, that experience was less acute than in the case of other peoples. There had been days indeed when their gods walked the earth with men and counselled them in troubles and fought in their battles; there had been days when the chiefest of all the gods sought a hero's aid against his giant foes; there had been days when men and women might aspire even to wedlock with immortals, and to possess children half-divine. In those days too death was not the only path by which the heavens or the house of Hades might be gained. Kings and prophets, warriors and fair women passed thither by grace of the gods living and unscathed; nay, even personal skill or prowess emboldened minstrel and hero to match themselves with the gods below, and wielding of club or sweeping of lyre sufficed to open the doors for their return to earth.

But those days soon passed; men walked and spoke and held open fellowship with the gods no more; the very poetry and imagination of the Greek temperament so fast outstripped in rapidity of development the growth of material or moral resources, that the rift between their religious ideals and the realities of their life and character ever widened, until the daily and familiar intercourse of their ancestors with the gods seemed to them a condition of life irretrievable and thenceforth impossible. This result was observed and remarked by the Greeks themselves, but

the process by which it had come about was not agreed. To one school of thought, it was the degeneracy of mankind through successive ages—the golden age in which men lived as gods and passed hence, as it were in sleep, to become spirits clothed in air, administering upon earth the purposes of mighty Zeus—the silver age wherein childhood was still long and innocent, and, though men's riper years brought cares and quarrels and indifference to holy things, yet when the earth covered them they were called blessed and received a measure of honour—the bronze age when all men's minds were set on war and their stalwart arms were busy with brazen weapons, and by each other's hands they were sent down to the chill dark house of Hades and their names were no more known—the age of heroes who were called half-divine, who fought in the Theban and the Trojan wars, and when the doom of death overtook them were granted a life apart from other men in the islands of the blest, because they had been nobler and more righteous than those of the age of bronze and had stemmed for a time the current of degeneracy—the fifth age in which the depravity of man grows apace and soon there will be nought but discord between father and son, and no regard will be paid to guest nor comrade nor brother, and children will slight their aged parents, and the voice of gods will be unknown to them[1]—to one school of thought, I say, it was simply and solely this decline of the human race, swift and only once checked, that was held accountable for their estrangement from the powers above them.

But such thinkers were in a minority. Humility and self-dissatisfaction were and are qualities foreign to the ordinary Greek. He observed the wide gulf that separated him from those whom he worshipped, but without any sense of unworthiness, without any depression of spirit. He was not despondent over his own shortcomings and limitations, but was filled rather with a larger complacency in the thought that, incapable though he might be to reproduce actually in his own life and character much of the beauty and nobility of his gods, he was so gifted in mind and godlike in understanding, that in his moments of highest imagination and most spiritual exaltation he could soar to that loftier plane whereon was enacted all the divine life, and could visualise his gods and feel the closeness of their presence.

[1] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 185, with reading *οὐδὲ θεῶν ὅπα εἰδότες*.

The motive of the highest acts of Greek worship seems to have been not the self-abasement of the worshipper and the glorification of the worshipped, but rather an obliteration of the distinctions between man and god, and a temporary attainment by the human of spiritual equality and companionship with the divine. The votary of Bacchus in his hours of wildest ecstacy enjoyed so completely this sense of equality and of real union with the god, that even to others it seemed fitting that he should be called by the god's own name[1].

But the hours, in which the Greeks of the historical age attained by a sort of religious frenzy such intimacy with their gods as their ancestors were famed to have enjoyed all their life long, were few and far between. The means of communion had become in general less direct, less personal. Yet even so the desire for communion continued unabated, and the belief in it still pervaded every phase of life. Intellectual progress had curiously little effect upon the dominant religious ideas. A strongly conservative attachment to ancient tradition and custom was strangely blended with that progressive spirit which made the intellectual development of the Athenians unique in its swiftness, as in its scope, among all peoples known to history. Their minds welcomed new speculations, new doctrines; but their hearts clung to the old unreasonable faith. Ancestral ideas remained for them the sole foundation of religion. Each poet or philosopher in drama or in dialogue, each man in his own heart, was free to build upon it and to ornament his superstructure as he would; and his work found a certain sanction in the appeal which it made to other men's sense of truth and of beauty. But for the foundation the *fiat* of antiquity had been pronounced and was immutable. Plato's reasoned exposition of the soul's immortality culminates in an Apocalypse ratified by the old mythology; and a quotation from Homer ever served to quash or to confirm the subtlest argument.

That the foundation-stone was not, in the estimate of reason, well and truly laid, that the basis of religion was insecure, must have been obvious to many. Pindar saw it, and, by refusing to impute to the gods any deed or purpose which his own heart condemned as ungodly, strove to repair its defects; Euripides too saw it, and scoffed at those who would build on so unstable a

[1] Βάκχος and Βάκχη, cf. Eur. *H. F.* 1119.

base. But the mass of men, though they also must have seen, were little troubled, it would seem, either to demolish or to repair. They accepted the old beliefs and ceremonies because they were sanctioned by the authority or the experience of past ages; and if sober reasoning and criticism exposed flaws and inconsistencies therein, what matter? They were, as they still are, a people incapable of any mental equilibrium; the mood of the hour swayed them now to emotions, now to reasonings; they did not cultivate consistency; they could not sit still and preserve an even balance between the passions of the heart and the judgements of the intellect, but threw their whole selves into the one scale, and the other for the moment was as vanity.

In the whole complex and irrational scheme of religion thus accepted, nothing was more highly valued than the means by which divine counsel was obtained for the conduct both of public and of private affairs. Omens were regularly taken before battle, at the critical moment when we should prefer to trust experience and generalship. Oracles were consulted as to the sites for planting colonies, in cases where a surveyor's report might have seemed more decisive. But the efficacy of these old methods of consulting the gods went almost unchallenged. It seems seldom to have occurred to men's minds that those untoward signs in the victim's entrails, which perhaps delayed tactics on which victory depended, were the symptoms of an internal disease and not the handiwork of a deity, or that the inferior and ambiguous verse, in which the gods condescended to give counsel, more often confused than confirmed human judgement. Even of the philosophers, according to Cicero[1], two only, Xenophanes and Epicurus, went so far as to deny the validity of all means of communion; and Socrates, for all his questioning and testing of truth, obeyed without question the whispered warnings of a *daemon*, and in deference to the ambiguous exhortations of a vision spent some of his last days in turning Aesop's fables into verse, that so he might go into the presence of the gods with his conscience clear. Thus, though men no longer expected to look upon the faces or to hear the voices of the gods, they still felt them to be close at hand, easy of access, ready to counsel, to warn, to encourage; and the methods of communion, in proportion as they stand condemned by reason, commend so

[1] *De divinatione*, I. 3.

much the more the steady faith of the people who used them and never doubted their efficacy. The answer of the ordinary man to those critics, who questioned the validity of divination merely because they could not understand the way in which it operated, is well expressed by Cicero: 'It is a poor sort of cleverness to try to upset by sophistry facts which are confirmed by the experience of ages. The reason of those facts I cannot discover; the dark ways of Nature, I suppose, conceal it from my view. God has not willed that I should know the reason, but only that I should use the means[1].'

The Greek nation saw many philosophies rise and fall, but it clung always to the religion which it had inherited. The doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, Zeno and Epicurus, became for the Greek people as though they had never been; but the old polytheism of the Homeric and earlier ages lived. Faith justified by experience was a living force; the conclusions of reason a mere fabrication. And an essential part of that polytheism which was almost instinctive in the Greeks was their belief in the possibility of close and frequent communion with their gods.

Now the means of communion between men and gods are obviously twofold—the methods by which men make their communications to the gods, and the methods by which the gods make their communications to men. The former class of communications involve for the most part questions or petitions; the latter are mainly the responses thereto; and it would seem natural to consider them in that order. But inasmuch as more is known of the ancient methods by which the gods signified their will to men than of the reverse process, it will be convenient first to establish the unity of modern folklore with ancient religion in this division of the subject, and afterwards to discuss how any modern ideas concerning the means open to man of communicating with the gods may bear upon the less known corresponding department of ancient religion. For if we find that the theory no less than the practice of divination, that is, of receiving and interpreting divine messages, has been handed down from antiquity almost unchanged, there will be a greater probability that, along with the general modern system of sacrifices or offerings which

[1] *op. cit.* I. 18.

accompany men's petitions, a curious conception of human sacrifice in particular which I once encountered is also a relic of ancient religion.

The survival of divination then in its several branches first claims our attention. The various modes employed are for the most part enumerated by Aeschylus[1] in the passage where Prometheus recounts the subjects in which he claimed to have first instructed mankind: dreams and their interpretation; chance words (*κληδόνες*) overheard, often conveying another meaning to the hearer than that which the speaker intended; meetings on the road (*ἐνόδιοι σύμβολοι*), where the person or object encountered was a portent of the traveller's success or failure in his errand; auspices in the strict sense of the word, observations, that is, of the flight and habits of birds; augury from a sacrificial victim, either by inspection of its entrails or by signs seen in the fire in which it was being consumed. To these arts Suidas[2] adds 'domestic divination' (*οἰκοσκοπικόν*)—the interpretation of various trivial incidents of domestic life—palmistry (*χειροσκοπικόν*), and divination from the twitching of any part of the body (*παλμικόν*). Finally of course there was direct inspiration (*μαντική*), either temporary, as in an individual seer, or permanent, as at the oracle of Delphi.

Whether the common-folk ever distinguished the comparative values of these many methods of divination may well be doubted. The Delphic oracle, I suspect, attained its high prestige more because it was ready to supply immediately on demand a more or less direct and detailed answer to a definite question, than because personal inspiration was held to be in any way a surer channel for divine communications than were other means of divination. Some thinkers indeed, chiefly of the Peripatetic school[3], were inclined to draw distinctions between 'natural' and 'skilled' divination[4]. The 'natural' methods, including dreams and all direct inspiration, were accepted by them; the 'skilled' methods, those which required the services of a professional augur or interpreter, were disallowed. But the division proposed was in itself bad—for dreams do not by any means exclusively belong to the first class, but probably in the majority of cases require interpre-

[1] *Prom. Vinct.* 485–99.
[2] Suid. *Lex.* s.v. *οἰωνιστική*.
[3] Cic. *de Divin.* I. 4.
[4] *Ibid.* I. 6 and 18.

tation by experts—and, apart from that consideration, the distinction was the invention of a philosophical sect and not an expression of popular feeling. There is nothing to show that the common-folk, believing as they did in the practicability of communion with their gods, esteemed one means of divination as intrinsically more valuable than another.

Nor was there any logical reason for such discrimination. Granted that there were gods superior to man in knowledge and in power and also willing to communicate with him, no restriction could logically be set upon the means of communication which they might choose to adopt. There was no reason why they should speak by the mouth of a priestess intoxicated with mephitic vapours or disturb men's sleep with visions rather than use the birds as their messengers or write their commandment on the intestines of a sacrificial victim.

A certain justification for accepting some means of divination, such as intelligible dreams, and for suspecting others, might certainly have been found in distrust of any human intermediary; vagrant and necessitous oracle-mongers infested the country; and even the priestess of Delphi, as history shows, was not always superior to political and pecuniary considerations. But experience of fraud did not apparently teach distrust; the fact that oracles and other means of divination were undoubtedly often abused did not cause the Greek people to reject the proper use of them; down to this day all the chief methods of ancient divination still continue. In some cases, we shall see, the modern employment of such methods is a mere survival of ancient custom without any intelligent religious motive; but in others there is abundant evidence that the modern folk are still actuated by the feelings which so dominated the lives of their ancestors—the belief in, and the desire for, close and frequent communion with the powers above.

Direct inspiration is a gift which at the present day a man is not inclined to claim for himself, though he will often attribute it to another; for it implies insanity. But though the gift is not therefore envied, it is everywhere respected. Mental derangement, which appears to me to be exceedingly common among the Greek peasants, sets the sufferer not merely apart from his fellows but in a sense above them. His utterances are received with a certain awe, and so far as they are intelligible are taken as

predictions. He is in general secure from ill-treatment, and though he do no work he is not allowed to want. The strangest case which I encountered was that of a man, unquestionably mad, who wandered from place to place and seemed to be known everywhere. I met him in all three times, in Athens, in Tenos, and in Thessaly. He had no fixed home, did no work, and was usually penniless; but a wild manner, a rolling eye, and an extraordinary power of conducting his part of a conversation in metrical, if not highly poetical, form sufficed to obtain for him lodging, food, and clothing, and even a free passage, it appeared, on the Greek coasting steamers. Whether the long monologues in verse in which he sometimes indulged were also improvisations, I could not of course tell; but once to have heard and seen his delivery of them was to understand why, among a superstitious people, he passed for a prophet. He was a modern type of those old seers whose name *μάντεις* was believed by Plato to have been formed from the verb *μαίνεσθαι*, 'to be mad'; his frenzy really gave the appearance of inspiration.

Dreams furnish a more sober and naturally also a more general means of communion with the gods; and the belief in them as a channel of divine revelation is both firmly rooted and widely spread. This indeed is only natural. The change from paganism to Christianity, even if it had been more thorough and complete than it actually has been, would probably not have affected this article of faith. So long as a people believe in any one or more deities not wholly removed from human affairs, it is logically competent for them to regard their dreams as a special communication to them from heaven; and Christianity, far from repudiating the old pagan idea, confirmed it by biblical authority. The Greek Church, as we shall see, has made effective use of it.

The degree of importance universally attached in old time to dreams is too well known to all students of Greek literature to call for comment. Artemidorus' prefatory remarks to his *Oneirocritica*, or 'Treatise on the interpretation of dreams,' and his criticism of former exponents of the same science, would alone prove that public interest in the subject must indeed have been great to stimulate so serious and so large a literature. There is the same practical evidence of a similar interest in modern Greece. Books of the same nature are sought after and consulted no less eagerly now than then.

A new edition of some Μέγας Ὀνειροκρίτης, or 'Great Dream-interpreter,' figures constantly in the advertisements of Athenian newspapers, and the public demand for such works is undeniable. In isolated homesteads, to which the Bible has never found its way, I have several times seen a grimy tattered copy of such a book preserved among the most precious possessions of the family, and honoured with a place on the shelf where stood the *icon* of the household's patron-saint and whence hung his holy lamp.

One of the pieces of information most frequently imparted to men in dreams is the situation of some buried treasure. The precautions necessary for unearthing it, namely complete reticence as to the dream, and the sacrifice of a cock, have already been mentioned[1]. This kind of dream has been utilized by the Greek Church. There is no article of ecclesiastical property of more value than a venerable *icon*; to any church or monastery which aspires to become a great religious centre an ancient and reputable *icon*, competent to work miracles, is indispensable. Now the most obvious way of obtaining such pictures is, it seems, to dig them up. A few weeks underground will have given the right tone to the crudest copy of crude Byzantine art, and all that is required, in order to determine the spot for excavation, is a dream on the part of some person privy to the interment. It was on this system that the miracle-working *icon* of Tenos came to be unearthed on the very day that the standard of revolt from Turkey was raised, thus making the island the home of patriotism as well as of religion. And this is no solitary example; the number of *icons* exhumed in obedience to dreams is immense; wherever the traveller goes in Greece, he is wearied with the same reiterated story, and if the picture in question happens to be of the Panagia, there is often an appendix to the effect that the painter of it was St Luke—an attribution which can only have been based on clerical criticism of the style. Inspection is now difficult; the old pagan custom of covering venerable statues with gold or silver foil by way of thank-offering[2] has, to avoid idolatry, been transferred to *icons*; and in many cases only the faces and the hands of the saints depicted are left visible, the

[1] Above, p. 281.
[2] Cf. Lucian, *Philopseudes*, 19 and 20.

outlines of the rest of the picture being merely incised upon the silver foil. But, with inspection thus limited, the layman does not detect in any crudity of style a sufficient reason why the saintly painter, if only he could have foreseen the ordinary decoration of Greek churches, should have had his productions put out of sight in the ground. Nevertheless the story of the origin of the *icon* is believed as readily as the story of its finding.

Nor is it only in stories that the discovery of *icons* in obedience to dreams is heard of. During my stay in Greece a village schoolmaster embarrassed the Education Office by applying for a week's holiday in order to direct a party of his fellow-villagers in digging up an *icon* of which he had dreamt, and to build a chapel for it on the spot. It was felt that a body concerned with religious as well as secular instruction ought not to commit the impiety of refusing such a request, but it was feared that other schoolmasters would be encouraged to dream.

Besides those visions which are concerned with the finding of treasure or of *icons*, that class of dream also may be noticed in which is given some divine communication as to the healing of the sick. Many a time I have met in some sanctuary of miraculous repute peasants from a far-off village, who have travelled from one end of Greece to another, bringing wife or child, in the faith that mind will be restored or sickness healed; time after time their story is the same, that they were bidden in a dream to go and tarry so many days in such a church, and they have started off at once, obedient to what they feel to be a promise of divine help, begging their way may be for many days, but unflinchingly hopeful. And then comes the long sojourn in a strange village, for a mere visit is not always enough; weeks and months they wait, sleeping each night in the holy precincts and if possible at the foot of the *icon*, hoping and believing that some mysterious virtue of the place will heal the sufferer, or at the least that in a fresh dream they will be told what is next to be done. And if nothing happen—for now and then rest or change of air or, it may be, faith[1] effects the cure desired—they return home with hope lessened but belief unshaken, ready to obey again if another message be vouchsafed to them from the dream-land of heaven.

[1] See above p. 60.

Such dreams as these are regarded as spontaneous revelations of the divine will, granted possibly in response to prayer, but in no way controlled or procured by any previous action of the dreamer. But there is one curious custom, observed by the girls of Greece, by which dreams are deliberately induced as a means of foreknowing their matrimonial destinies. On the eve of St Catharine's day[1] most appropriately, for she is the patroness of all marrying and giving in marriage, but sometimes also on the first day of Lent[2], the girls knead and bake cakes (*ἁρμυροκούλουρα*) of which, as their name implies, the chief ingredient is salt. By consuming undue quantities of this concoction, and often by assuaging the consequent thirst with an equally undue quantity of wine, they produce a condition of body eminently suited to cause a troubled sleep, and, their minds being already absorbed in speculations on marriage, it is little wonder if their dreams reveal to them their future husbands. How far this custom is now taken seriously, I cannot determine; in some districts it has certainly degenerated into a somewhat disreputable game. But the fact that the intoxication of the girls is tolerated on this occasion among a peasantry whose men even are seldom drunk except on certain religious occasions—on Easter-day and after funerals—proves clearly that the custom was once, as I think it sometimes is now, a genuinely religious rite and an acknowledged means of divination.

A modification of this custom, preferred in some districts as obviating alike the unpleasant process of eating salt-cake and the disreputable sequel thereto, substitutes for dreaming two other ancient methods of divination—divination by drawing lots, a primitive system common to many peoples but employed nevertheless even by established oracles[3] in ancient Greece, and divination from chance words overheard by the diviner, a method which is, I think, more exclusively Hellenic. For this form of the custom also salt-cakes are required, but only a morsel of each is eaten, and the remainder of the cake is divided into three portions, to which are tied respectively red, black, and blue ribbands. Each girl then places her three pieces under her pillow for the night, and in the morning draws out one by chance. The red ribband

[1] Nov. 26. [2] Καμπούρογλου, *Ἱστορία τῶν Ἀθηναίων*, III. p. 19.
[3] Cf. Cic. *de Divinat.* I. 18.

denotes a bachelor, the black a widower, and the blue a stranger, that is to say some one other than a fellow-villager. Then, in order to supplement with fuller detail the indications of the lot, the girl takes her stand in the door-way of the cottage and listens to the casual conversation of the neighbours or the passers-by; and the first name, trade, occupation, and suchlike which she hears mentioned are taken to be those of her future husband.

Another similar custom, practised only by girls and not necessarily taken more seriously than a game of forfeits, preserves in its modern name ὁ κλήδονας[1] the old word κληδών, and the purpose of the custom is to obtain that which Homer[2] actually denoted by κληδών, a presage drawn from chance words. The preliminaries of the ceremony are as follows. On the eve of the feast of St John the Baptist[3] a boy (who for choice should be the first-born of parents still living) is sent to fetch fresh water from the spring or well. This water is known as ἀμίλητο νερό, 'speechless water,' because the boy who brings it is forbidden to speak to anyone on his way. Each girl then drops into the vessel of water some object such as a coin, a ring, or, most frequently, an apple as her token. The vessel is then closed up and left for the night on the roof of a house or some other open place 'where the stars may see it.' The proceedings of the next morning vary. According to one traveller[4], each girl first takes out her own apple—for he mentions only this token—and then draws off some of the water into a smaller vessel. This vessel is then supported by two other girls on the points of their four thumbs and begins to revolve of its own accord. If it turn towards the right, the girl may expect to marry as she wishes; if to the left, otherwise. Also, he says, they wash their hands with this water and then go out into the road, and take the first name they hear spoken as that of their future husband. This latter part of the ceremony is true to the meaning of the word κλήδονας and is a genuine instance of divination from chance words. But

[1] The shift of accent is curious. It may be some result of dialect, but is not explained.

[2] e.g. Hom. *Od.* XVIII. 116.

[3] At midsummer. The name of the custom ὁ κλήδονας is sometimes given as a title to the saint himself; and from his willingness to enlighten enquirers concerning their future lot he is also named sometimes ὁ Φανιστής (the enlightener) and ὁ Ριζικάς (from ρίζικο, 'lot' or 'destiny'), Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, ἡ Σινασός, p. 86.

[4] Sonnini de Magnoncourt, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie*, II. pp. 126–7.

neither this nor the former part as described by Magnoncourt is generally practised now. The usual procedure is either for the boy who fetched the water or for the girls in rotation to plunge the hand in and draw out the first object touched, improvising or reciting at the same time some couplet favourable or adverse to the love or matrimonial prospects of her who shall be found to own the forthcoming object; and so in turn, until each girl has received back her token and learnt the presage of her fate.

The recitation of possibly prepared distichs by those who are taking part in the ceremony is certainly a less pure method of divination than the earlier practice described by Magnoncourt. The prediction is deliberately provided, and the element of chance or of divine guidance is confined to the drawing of the token. The older method exhibits more clearly the relation of the modern custom to the superstitious observation of κληδόνες from the time of the *Odyssey*[1] onwards. Thus when Odysseus heard the suitors threaten to take the beggar Irus to Epirus, 'even to the tyrant Echetus the destroyer of all men,' he hailed the chance words as a divine ratification of his hope that soon the suitors should take their own journey to another destroyer of all men, even the tyrant of the nether world, and 'he rejoiced in the presage' (χαῖρεν δὲ κλεηδόνι)[2].

The same method of divination was frequently employed in the classical age also, and that too not only privately[3] but even by public oracles. It was thus that Hermes Agoraeus at Pherae made response to his worshippers. The enquirer presented himself towards evening before the statue of the god, burnt incense on the hearth, filled with oil and lighted some bronze lamps that stood there, placed a certain bronze coin of the local currency upon the altar, whispered his question into the ear of the statue, and then at once holding his hands over his ears made his way out of the agora. Once outside, he removed his hands, and the first words which greeted his ears were accepted as the god's response to his question[4]. A primitive statue of Hermes with

[1] In the *Iliad* it is not found. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divination*, I. p. 156.

[2] Hom. *Od.* XVIII. 114 ff. Cf. also *Od.* XX. 98 ff.

[3] For examples see Herod. V. 72, VIII. 114, IX. 64, 91; Xenoph. *Anab.* I. 8. 16. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 157. The word φήμη is in some of these passages used in the sense of κληδών.

[4] Paus. VII. 22. 2, 3.

the surname κλεηδόνιος existed also at Pitane[1], which place may be the actual site of that 'sanctuary of chance utterances' (κληδόνων ἱερόν) to which, according to Pausanias[2], the people of Smyrna resorted for oracles. And at Thebes again Apollo Spodios gave his replies in like manner[3].

Clearly then in antiquity divination from chance words was a well-established religious institution; and at the present day, though the practice is rarer, its character is unchanged. The religious nature of the two customs which I have described is shown by their association with the festivals of St Catharine and St John the Baptist; and though in different localities or periods a certain amount of divination by the lot or other means has been mixed up with divination from chance words, the latter obviously forms the essence of both rites, supplying as it does to the one its very name, and supplementing in the other the meagre indications of the lot with more detailed information. A girl may learn from the colour of the ribband attached to the piece of salt-cake which she happens to draw whether her future husband is bachelor, widower, or stranger; but only from the chance utterance accepted as an answer to her own secret questionings can she learn the name and home and occupation and appearance of her destined husband.

The next branch of divination, the science of reading omens of success or failure in the objects which a traveller meets on his road, is still largely cultivated. In old days indeed it was so elaborate a science that a treatise, as Suidas tells us, could be written on this one method of divination alone. Possibly the same feat might be accomplished at the present day if a complete collection were made of all the superstitions on the subject of 'meeting' (ἀπάντημα) in all the villages of Greece. How instructive the results might be, I cannot forecast; but at any rate the task is beyond me, and I must content myself with mentioning a few of the commonest examples. To meet a priest is always unlucky, and for men even more so than for women, for, unless they take due precautions as they pass him[4], their virility is likely to be im-

[1] Le Bas et Waddington, *Voyage Archéologique*, v. 1724[a].

[2] Paus. IX. 11. 7. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divin.* I. p. 159 and II. p. 400.

[3] Paus. *ibid.*

[4] The proper precaution is prescribed in the couplet, *'στὸ δρόμο σὰν ἰδῇς παπᾶ, | κράτησ' τ' ἀρχίδια σου καλά. Si per viam sacerdoti occurres, testiculos tuos teneto.*

paired; and the omen is even worse if the priest happen to be riding a donkey, for even the name of that animal is not mentioned by some of the peasants without an apology[1]. To meet a witch also is unfortunate, and since any old woman may be a witch, it is wise to make the sign of the cross before passing her. A cripple is also ominous of failure in an enterprise. On the other hand to meet an insane person is usually accounted a good omen, for insanity implies close communion with the powers above. To meet a woman with child is also fortunate, for it indicates that the journey undertaken will bear fruit; and the peasant by way of acknowledgement never fails to bow or to bare his head, and if he be exceptionally polite may wish the woman a good confinement. Of animals those which most commonly forebode ill are the hare, the rat, the stoat, the weasel, and any kind of snake. In Aetolia superstition is so strong regarding these that the mere sight of one of them, or indeed of the trail of a snake across the path, is enough to deter many a peasant from his day's work and to send him back home to sit idly secure from morn till night; and even the more stout-hearted will cross themselves or spit three times before proceeding.

That some of these beliefs date from classical times is certain. Aristophanes, playing upon the use of ὄρνις, 'a bird,' in the sense of 'omen,' rallies the Athenians upon calling 'a meeting a bird, a sound a bird, a servant a bird, and an ass a bird[2]'; and there can be little doubt that the ass belonged then as now to the category of objects ominous to encounter on the road; and the same author[3], corroborated in this case by Theophrastus' portrait of the superstitious man[4], speaks to the dread inspired by a weasel crossing a man's path. The snake too, it can hardly be doubted, was, owing perhaps to its association with tombs, an object of awe to the superstitious out of doors as well as within the house[5]. On the other hand an insane person apparently was in Theophrastus' time not as now an omen of good but of evil, to be averted by spitting on the bosom[6]. But though the modern interpretations of such omens may not be identical in every respect with the old, enough

[1] γαϊδοῦρι με συμπάθειο, 'a donkey, with your leave.' So also often in mentioning the number 'three,' and sometimes with 'five.'

[2] Aristoph. *Aves*, 720.

[3] *Eccles.* 792.

[4] Theophr. *Char.* 16. 1.

[5] *Ibid.*

[6] *op. cit.* 16. 3.

has been said to show that the science of divining from the encounters of the road is still flourishing.

The observation of birds is in many cases closely allied with the last method of divination; for naturally the peasant as he goes on his way is as quick to notice the birds as any other object which he encounters. But since auspices may also be taken under other conditions, it will be well to observe the old line of demarcation, and to treat this branch of augury, as it was treated in ancient handbooks[1], separately. Moreover the attitude of the modern folk towards these two branches of divination justifies the division. The superstitions which I have just recorded are somewhat blindly and unintelligently held; but in the taking of auspices proper the ordinances of ancient lore which the people follow are felt by them to be doubly sanctioned—by reason as well as by antiquity; they apprehend the theory on which their practice is based—the idea that birds are better suited than any other animate thing, by virtue both of their rapid flight and of their keen and extended vision, to be the messengers between gods and men.

In practice this branch of divination is still concerned chiefly with the large and predatory birds to which alone was originally applied the term *οἰωνός*. 'The largest, the strongest, the most intelligent, and at the same time those whose solitary habits gave them more individual character,' says a French writer[2], 'were deliberately preferred by the diviners of antiquity as the subjects of their observation. For these and these only was reserved at first the name *οἰωνός*, "solitary bird[3]," or bird of presage'; and he goes on to suggest that the Oriental belief in the magical power of blood to revivify the souls of the dead and to stimulate prophecy influenced the selection for a prophetic *rôle* of carnivorous birds such as might indeed often feed on the entrails of those very victims from which sacrificial omens were taken. But the reasons assigned by Plutarch for the pre-eminence of birds among all other things as the messengers of heaven apply with so special a force to the special class of birds selected, that it seems unnecessary to search out reasons more abstruse.

'Birds,' he says[4], 'by their quickness and intelligence and their

[1] Cf. Suidas, s.v. *οἰωνιστική*.
[2] Bouché Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 129.
[3] Assuming derivation from *οἶος*, as *νἰωνός* from *νιός*, *κοινωνός* from *κοινός*.
[4] Plutarch, *de solertia animalium*, cap. 20 (p. 975).

alertness in acting upon every thought, are a ready instrument for the use of God, who can prompt their movements, their cries and songs, their pauses or wind-like flights, thus bidding some men check, and others pursue to the end, their course of action or ambitions. It is on this account that Euripides calls birds in general "heralds of gods," while Socrates speaks of making himself "a fellow-servant with swans."'

In this special class of ominous birds the principal group, says the same French writer[1], was composed of the eagle (*ἀετός*), the messenger[2] of Zeus, the 'most perfect of birds[3]'; the vulture (*γύψ*), which closely rivalled even the king of birds[4]; the raven (*κόραξ*), the favourite and companion of Apollo, a bird so much observed that there were specialists (*κορακομάντεις*) who studied no other species; and the carrion-crow (*κορώνη*), transferred from the service of Apollo to that of Hera[5] or Athene[6]. These, it may safely be said, were observed at all periods. Of others, various species of hawk (*ἴεραξ, ἶρηξ*)—in particular that known as *κίρκος*, acting in Homeric times as the 'swift messenger of Apollo[7]' and thus rivalling the raven—and with them the heron[8] (*ἐρωδιός*) enjoyed in early times great respect, but gradually fell out of favour with the augur. But as these disappeared from the canon of ornithological divination, certain other birds were admitted, the wren[9] (*τρόχιλος* or *βασιλίσκος*), the owl (*γλαῦξ*)[10], the *κρέξ* dubiously identified with our 'rail' (*crex rallus*, Linn.), and the woodpecker (*δρυοκολάπτης*).

The continuity of the art of taking auspices is at once obvious when it is found that the birds which the modern peasant most frequently observes are of the very same class which furnished the Homeric gods with their special envoys. Eagles, vultures, hawks, ravens, crows—these are still the chief messengers of heaven, and only one other bird can claim equality with them, that bird which in classical times symbolised wisdom, the owl.

Of the methods pursued by the professional augurs in ancient Greece unfortunately less is known. The best treatise on the

[1] Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divin.* I. p. 133–4.
[2] e.g. Hom. *Il.* XXIV. 310.
[3] Hom. *Il.* VIII. 247.
[4] *Etymol. Magn.* p. 619, s.v. *οἰωνοπόλος*.
[5] Apoll. Rhod. III. 930.
[6] Ovid, *Metam.* II. 548 sqq.
[7] Hom. *Od.* XV. 526.
[8] Hom. *Il.* X. 274.
[9] Plutarch, *Pyth. Orac.* cap. 22.
[10] Paroemiogr. Graec. I. pp. 228, 231, 352.

subject is that of Michael Psellus[1], written in the eleventh century; but probably ancient works on the subject, such as that of Telegonus to which Suidas[2] refers, were then extant and contributed the bulk of his information. But even so it is the broad principles rather than the detailed application of them which Psellus presents, and on them we must in the main rely in comparing the modern science with the ancient.

First of all the species of bird under observation had to be ascertained; for the characters of different species were held to be so various that birds as closely cognate as the raven and the crow employed wholly contrary methods of communication with mankind. 'If as we go out of our house to work,' says Psellus[3], 'we hear the cry of a raven behind or of a crow in front, it forebodes anxieties and difficulties in our business, while if a crow fly past and caw on the left or a raven do likewise on the other side, it gives hope and confidence.' The crow then was not subject even to the rule concerning right and left which applied, so far as I know, to all other birds, but, thanks to some innate contrariety, reversed the normal significance of position, and therewith also of cry and of flight[4]. Such exceptions even to the most general rules made the accurate identification of species an indispensable preliminary to successful augury. The same primary condition still holds. The diviner must be able to distinguish the cawing of a crow settled on his roof from that of a jackdaw; the former is an omen of death, as perhaps it was in Hesiod's day[5], to some member of his family, the latter heralds the coming of a letter from a friend abroad. Again he must be able to distinguish the brown owl (*κουκουβάγια*) from the tawny owl (*χαροποῦλι*)[6]; the message of the former may be good or bad, as we shall see, according to its actions, while the latter brings only presages of woe.

The species having been identified, there remained, according to Psellus[7], four possible points in the behaviour of the bird itself (all of them liable to be modified in significance by the position of

[1] *περὶ ὠμοπλατοσκοπίας καὶ οἰωνοσκοπίας.*
[2] Suid., *Lexicon*, s.v. *οἰωνιστική.*
[3] *op. cit.* § 2.
[4] Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 140, note 2.
[5] Hesiod, *Works and Days*, 745.
[6] The identification of the birds named by even the more intelligent peasants is necessarily uncertain. The name *κουκουβάγια* is seemingly onomatopoeic, suggesting the hooting of the owl, but is generally reserved to the brown owl.
[7] *op. cit.* § 2.

the observer) to be noticed and interpreted; these were its cry (anciently φωνή or κλαγγή), its flight (πτῆσις), its posture when settled (ἕδρα or καθέδρα), and any movement or action performed by it while thus settled (ἐνέργεια). These divisions are still recognised in modern augury.

The cry is observed in the case of many birds. The scream of an eagle is a warning of fighting or conflict to come. The croak of a raven, especially if it be thrice repeated, while the bird is flying over a house or a village, is a premonition of death to one of the inmates. The laugh of the woodpecker, owing I suppose to its mocking sound, is a sign that an intrigue against some one's person or pocket is in train. The repeated call of the cuckoo within the bounds of a village forebodes an epidemic therein.

Flight is chiefly observed in the case of the birds of prey. The successful swoop of an eagle upon its prey, or the rapid determined flight of a hawk in pursuit of some other bird, is an encouragement to the observer (provided of course that the birds are seen on his right hand) to pursue untiringly any enterprise in which he is engaged, and is a promise of success and profit therein. In Scyros I once pointed out to my guide a large hawk chasing a flock of pigeons, which he at once hailed as a good omen and watched carefully as long as it was in sight; and when I asked him what kind of hawk it was, he promptly replied that that kind was known as τσίκρος—the goshawk, I believe. This word is a modern form of the ancient κίρκος[1], and a closely similar incident is mentioned in the *Odyssey*, when this bird, the 'swift messenger of Apollo,' is seen by Telemachus on the right, tearing a pigeon in its talons and scattering its feathers to the ground, and is taken to foreshow the fate that awaits Eurymachus[2].

The position occupied and the posture are observed above all in the case of owls. The 'brown owl' (κουκουβάγια), perched upon the roof of a house and suggesting by its inert posture that it is waiting in true oriental fashion for an event expected within a few days, forebodes a death in the household; but if it settle there for a few moments only, alert and vigilant, and then fly off elsewhere, it betokens merely the advent and sojourn there of

[1] In the dialects of Scyros and other Aegean islands, κ before the sounds of ε and ι is regularly softened to τσ. The ρ has, as often, suffered metathesis.

[2] Hom. *Od.* xv. 524 ff.

some acquaintance. Another species of owl, our 'tawny owl' I believe, known popularly as χαροπούλι or 'Charon's bird[1],' is, as the name suggests, a messenger of evil under all circumstances, whether it be heard hooting or be seen sitting in deathlike stillness or flitting past like a ghost in the gathering darkness.

The casual actions and movements of birds are less observed now than the cry, flight, and posture; nor am I aware of any auspices being drawn therefrom with regard to any matters of higher importance and interest than the prospective state of the weather. For such humdrum prognostication poultry[2] serve better than the more dignified birds—perhaps because their movements on the ground are more easily observed—and by pluming themselves, by scratching a hole in which to dust themselves over, and by roosting on one leg or with their heads turned in some particular direction foretell rain, fine weather, or a change of wind.

All these auspices are further modified, as in ancient times, by the position of the observer in reference to the bird observed. The right hand side is the region of good omen, whether the bird be seen or heard; and if it be a case of the bird crossing the path of the observer, passage from left to right is to be desired, on the principle that all is well that ends well; flight from right to left indicates a decline of good fortune. Motion towards the right, it may be noted, has always been the auspicious direction in Greece. In that direction, according to Homer, the herald carried round the lot which had been shaken from the helmet, to be claimed by that chieftain whose token it might prove to be[3]; in that direction Odysseus in beggar-guise proceeded round the board, asking alms of the suitors[4]; in that direction even the gods passed their wine[5]. And in like manner at the present day wine is passed, cards are played, and at weddings bride and bridegroom are led round the altar, from left to right. Thus then in modern augury too, if the eagle's scream, which forebodes fighting, be heard on the right, the hearer will come well out of it, but if on the left, he is like to be worsted. If the woodpecker laugh on the right, the hearer

[1] Derivation from χαρά, instead of Χάρος, and πουλί is possible, but less likely. It would then be an euphemistic name, 'bird of joy.' An owl named στριγλοπούλι (on which see above, p. 180) appears to be a semi-mythical bird chiefly found in Hades; it is possibly identical with 'Charon's bird.'

[2] Cf. Ἐμαν. Μανωλακάκης, Καρπαθιακά, p. 126.

[3] *Il.* VII. 184. [4] *Od.* XVII. 365. [5] *Il.* I. 597.

may proceed with full confidence to cheat his neighbour, but if the sound come from the left, he must be wary to baffle intrigues against himself. If the hawk pursue its prey on the right or across a man's path from left to right, he may take the pursuer as the type of himself and go about the work in hand with assurance of success; but if the omen be on the other side or in the other direction, some enemy is the hawk and he himself is the pigeon to be plucked.

The interpretation of auspices is also affected by number. A single or twice repeated cry of a bird may be of good omen, but, if the same note be heard three times, the meaning may be reversed. This applies in Cephallenia, as I was told, to the case already mentioned of a raven flying over a house; one or two croaks are a presage of security or plenty, but three are a warning of imminent death. In this detail a pronounced change of feeling towards the number three is responsible for what must, I think, be a contravention of the ancient rules in the case. According to Michael Psellus, an even number of cries from the crow were lucky and an odd number unlucky; but the crow, as we have seen, was perverse and abnormal; reversing therefore the rule in the case of other birds, we find that an odd number of croaks from a raven should be lucky. But the number three, which in old times was lucky, is now universally unlucky; the peasant often will apologize for having to mention the number; and Tuesday, being called Τρίτη, the 'third day' of the week, is the unlucky day. But if in this case the significance of a particular number has changed, the principle of taking number into consideration is indubitably ancient.

Moreover there are some cases in which even the particular application of the old principle holds good. The first, almost the only, literary poet of modern Greece (as distinguished from the many composers of unwritten ballads), who found beauty in the popular beliefs and music in the vulgar tongue, makes his heroine thus divine her own death:

> Καὶ τὰ πουλάκι' ἀποῦ 'ρθασιν συντροφιασμέν' ὁμάδη
> σημάδ' εἶν' πῶς ὀγλήγορα πανδρεύομαι 'στὸν Ἄιδη·
> λογιάζω κι' ὁ 'Ρωτόκριτος ἀπόθανε 'στὰ ξένα
> κ' ἦρθ' ἡ ψυχή του νά μ' εὑρῇ νὰ σμίξῃ μετ' ἐμένα[1].

"And the little birds that have come consorting close together are a sign that soon I am to be wed in Hades. I see that Erotocritus has died in a strange land, and his soul has come to seek me, to mingle with me."

[1] Βικέντιος Κορνάρος, Ἐρωτόκριτος, p. 320.

Here neither the species of the birds nor their cry nor flight is taken into account; the whole significance of the omen turns on the close company which they kept. And for the method of interpreting it we can go back to Aristotle. 'Seers observe whether birds settle apart or settle together; the former indicates enmity, the latter mutual peace[1].'

Lastly, as regards practical augury from birds at the present day it may be laid down as a rule that any extraordinary phenomenon, exciting in the simple peasant's mind more alarm than curiosity, passes for a bad omen. The hen that so far forgets her sex as to crow like a cock falls under suspicion and the knife at once. To the professional diviner of old time probably such incidents were less distressing; he could observe such striking anomalies in as calmly judicial a spirit as the details of more ordinary occurrences. But at the present day, though there are magicians in plenty, there are no specialists, to my knowledge, in the science of auspices. The modern peasant does not entice the birds with food to a special spot, as did Teiresias[2], in order to listen to their talk and to gain from them deliberately the knowledge of things that are and things that shall be. But amateur though he be, lacking in power of minute observation and in science of detailed interpretation, such rudiments of the art as he possesses are an heritage from the old Hellenic masters of divination.

So far then as the broad principles of practical auspice-taking are concerned, the proofs of the identity of modern with ancient methods are sufficiently complete; and it remains only to show that the modern practice of this art is not a mere inert survival of customs no longer understood but is in truth informed by the same intelligent religious spirit as in antiquity. What that spirit was, is admirably defined in that passage of Plutarch which I have already quoted, in which he claims that the quickness of birds and their intelligence and their alertness to act upon every thought qualify them, beyond all other living things, for the part of messengers between gods and men. Celsus too in his polemics against Christianity, made frank confession of the old faith: 'We believe in the prescience of all animals and particularly of birds. Diviners are only interpreters of their predictions. If then the

[1] Aristot. *Hist. An.* IX. 1.
[2] Cf. Aesch. *Sept.* 24, Soph. *Antig.* 999 sqq.

birds...impart to us by signs all that God has revealed to them, it follows of necessity that they have a closer intimacy than we with the divine, that they surpass us in knowledge of it, and are dearer to God than we[1].' Indeed it might seem that there was hope of birds knowing that which a god sought in vain to learn. To Demeter enquiring for her ravished child 'no god nor mortal man would tell the true tale, nor came there to her any bird of omen as messenger of truth[2].' In effect, the special aptitude of birds to carry divine messages to men was never questioned in ancient Greece; it was a very axiom of religion, without which the whole science of auspices would have been a baseless fabrication.

Now it would have been no matter of surprise for us, if practical augury had still been in vogue at the present day and the theory had been forgotten; if the customs born of a belief in the prophetic power of birds had, with the inveteracy of all custom, outlived the parent principle. Rather it is surprising that among all the perplexity and bewilderment of thought caused by the long series of changes, religious, political, and social, through which Greece has passed, this recognition of birds as intermediaries between heaven and earth has abated none of its force or its purity, neither vanquished by the direct antagonism of Christianity, nor contaminated by the influx of Slavonic or other foreign thought. Yet so it is; and the perusal of any collection of modern folk-songs will show that the idea is fully as familiar now as in the literature of old time.

A few examples may be cited; and in selecting them I shall exclude from consideration those many Klephtic ballads which open with a conversation between three 'birds[3]'; for the word 'bird' (πουλί) seems to have become among the Klephts a colloquial equivalent for 'spy' or 'scout,' suggested perhaps by the qualities of intelligence, alertness, and speed required, and it is admittedly[4] impossible in many cases to determine whether the term has its literal or its conventional meaning. Moreover these openings of ballads have passed into a somewhat set form; and formulae are

[1] Origen, *contra Cels.* IV. 88.
[2] *Homeric Hymn to Demeter*, 46.
[3] e.g. Passow, *Popul. Carm.* nos. 122, 123, 213, 232, 234, 235, 251 *et passim.*
[4] A. Luber in a monograph *Die Vögel in den historischen Liedern der Neugriechen*, pp. 6 ff., notes the impossibility of determining in many cases whether a real bird or a scout is meant.

no more proof of the continuance of belief than mummies of the continuance of life.

But, even with the range of trustworthy evidence thus limited, the residue of popular poetry contains ample store of passages in which birds are recognised as the best messengers between this world and another. And here, as we shall see, the reiteration of the idea is not uniform in expression; the thought has not been crystallised into a number of beautiful but inert phrases; it is still alive, still young, still procreative of fresh poetry.

There is a well-known folk-song, recorded in several versions, which tells how a young bride, trusting in the might of her nine brothers and in her husband's valour, boasted that she had no fear of Charos. 'A bird, an evil bird, went unto Charos, and told him, and Charos shot an arrow at her and the girl grew pale; a second and a third he shot and stretched her on her death-bed[1].' The special bird in the poet's mind was, one may surmise, 'Charon's bird,' the tawny owl, which as I have noted is always a messenger of evil. In another poem a bird issues from the lower world and brings doleful tidings to women who weep over their lost ones. 'A little bird came forth from the world below; his claws were red and his feathers black, reddened with blood and blackened with the soil. Mothers run to see him, and sisters to learn of him, and wives of good men to get true tidings. Mother brings sugar, and sister scented wine, and wives of good men bear amaranth in their hands. "Eat the sugar, bird, and drink of the scented wine, and smell the amaranth, and confess to us the truth." "Good women, that which I saw, how should I tell it or confess it? I saw Charos riding in the plains apace; he dragged the young men by the hair, the old men by their hands, and ranged at his saddle-bow he bore the little children[2]."'

Nor is it only between earth and the nether world that birds carry tidings to and fro; earth and heaven are equally united by their ministry. An historical ballad, belonging to the year 1825, when Ibrahim Pasha had just occupied the fortress of Navarino and other places in the Morea and was about to join in investing Mesolonghi, gives to this idea unusually imaginative treatment; for the bird which brings from heaven encouragement and prophe-

[1] Passow, *Popul. Carm.* no. 415, vv. 5—7. Cf. 413, 414.
[2] *Ibid.* no. 410.

cies of future success (one of which was literally fulfilled in the battle of Navarino two years later) is an incarnation of the soul of a fallen Greek warrior. '"Would I were a bird" (I said), "that I might fly and go to Mesolonghi, and see how goes the sword-play and the musketry, how fight the unconquered falcons[1] of Roumelie." And a bird of golden plumage warbled answer to me: "Hold, good George; an thou thirstest for Arab[2] blood, here too are infidels for thee to slay as many as thou wilt. Dost see far away yonder the Turkish ships? Charos is standing over them, and they shall be turned to ashes." "Good bird, how didst thou learn this that thou tellest me?" "A bird I seem to thee to be, but no bird am I. Yon island that I espied for thee afar belongeth to Navarino; 'twas there I spent my last breath a-fighting. Tsamados am I, and unto the world have I come; from the heavens where I dwell I discern you clearly, yet yearn to see you face to face." "Nay, what shouldest thou see now among us in our unhappy land? Knowest thou not what befell and now is in the Morea?" "Good George, be not distraught, consent not to despair; though the Morea fight not now, a time will come again when they will fight like wild beasts and chase their foe. Piteously shall bones lie scattered before Mesolonghi, and there shall the lions of Suli rejoice." And the bird flew away and went up to the heavens[3].'

Such an identification of the winged messenger with the soul of a dead man does not represent the ordinary thought of the people; it is a conceit peculiar to this ballad; but the very fact that the dead warrior is made to assume the guise of a bird in order to communicate with his living comrades shows how strong is the popular feeling that birds are the natural intermediaries between earth and heaven.

Thus then the ancient belief that birds are among the most apt instruments of divine and human communion has survived as little impaired by lapse of ages as the practical science of augury founded upon it. Perhaps indeed it has even fared better; for practical augury has, I suspect, suffered from the paucity or extinction of professional augurs, who alone could be expected to

[1] ξεφτέρι (probably a diminutive from ὀξύπτερος), a 'falcon,' is a favourite name for the warrior, just as the humbler πουλί, 'bird,' is used for 'scout.'

[2] With reference to Ibrahim's Egyptian troops.

[3] Passow, *Popul. Carm.* no. 256.

remember and to transmit to their successors all the complex details of their art, whereas the old faith may even have gained thereby; for history, I suppose, is not void of instances in which the professional exponents of a religion have fostered its forms and have starved its spirit, forgetting their ministry in their desire for mastery, and making their office the sole gate of communion with heaven. But, be that as it may, such decline as there may have been from the complete and elaborate system of auspices which the ancients possessed is not at any rate due to any abatement of the ancient belief in the mediation of birds.

Not of course that the peasant, when he draws an omen from the eagle's stoop or the raven's croak, pauses at all to reflect on the general principle by which his act is guided; his recognition of the principle is then as formal and unconscious as is his avowal of Christianity when he crosses himself. But if ever in meditative mood he seeks the reason and basis of his auspice-taking, he falls back, as the popular poetry proves, on the doctrine that the powers above and below have chosen birds as their messengers to mankind.

Doubtless many other peoples have held or still hold kindred beliefs; but the fact that in Modern Greece the same class of birds is observed as in Ancient Greece and that the same broad principles of interpretation are followed is sufficient warranty that the underlying belief is also a genuinely Hellenic heritage.

The next method of divination to be considered, that namely in which omens were obtained from sacrifice, was anciently divided into two branches; in one the diviner concerned himself with the dissection of the victim, and based his predictions on the appearance of various internal parts; in the other, special portions of the victim were consumed by fire, and omens were read in the flame or smoke therefrom. Of the latter I have discovered no trace in Modern Greece; but the former still survives in some districts.

Naturally however this mode of divination is less frequently practised than that with which I have just dealt. The cry or the flight of birds can be observed without let or hindrance in the course of daily work, and, what is more important still, without cost; while this method involves the slaying of a victim, and is consequently confined to high days and holidays when the peasants eat meat. But when occasion offers or even demands the per-

formance of the rite, the presages drawn therefrom are the more valued because they are less readily to be obtained.

And the value attached to them is by no means diminished because the method pursued is less intelligent than the taking of auspices. In the latter case, as we have seen, the common-folk have a reasonable basis for their actions in the universal belief that birds are by nature qualified to act as messengers between gods and men; in the former the peasants are more blindly and mechanically repeating the practices of their forefathers. They would be hard put to it to say how it comes to pass that divine counsels should be found figured in the recesses of a sheep's anatomy. But in their very inability to answer this question, no less than in their acceptance of the means of communion, they resemble their ancestors; for, with all their love of enquiry, they too practised the art without answering conclusively or unanimously the questionings of their own hearts concerning it. One theory advanced was that the anatomical construction of the victim was directly affected by the prayers and religious rites to which it was subjected. Another held the internal symptoms to be inexorable and immutable, and saw divine agency only in the promptings of the sacrificer's mind and his choice of an animal whose entrails were suitably inscribed by nature[1]. A third view, advocated by Plato, was that the liver was as a mirror in which divine thought was reflected; during life this divine thought might remain hidden as tacit intuition or be manifested in prophetic utterance; after death the divine visions contemplated by the soul were left recorded in imagery upon the liver, and faded only by degrees[2]. The obvious objection to this theory was its too practical corollary, that human entrails would be the most interesting to consult. Less barbarous therefore in consequences, if also less exquisite in idea, was the fourth doctrine, propounded by Philostratus, that the liver had no power of presage unless it were completely emancipated from the passions and surrendered wholly to divine influence—a condition best fulfilled by animals of peaceful and apathetic temperament[3].

But while these theories were built up and knocked down, the practices which they were meant to explain continued firm and

[1] Cic. *de Divin.* I. 52, II. 12, 15, 16, 17. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divin.* I. p. 167.

[2] Plato, *Tim.* 71 c.

[3] Philostr. *Vit. Apollon.* VIII. 7. 49—52. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 168.

unshaken. The fact seems to be that the custom of consulting entrails was not native to Greece. In Homeric times the liver was not dissected in search of omens, and such observations as were made were directed to the brightness of the flame and the ascent of the smoke from burnt offerings and not to any malformation or discoloration of the victim's inward parts. All that could be learnt was whether the sacrifice, and therefore also the prayers accompanying it, were accepted or rejected. The complexities of post-Homeric divination from burnt sacrifice and the whole system of inspecting the entrails seem to have been a foreign importation. Whether the source was Etruscan, Carian, Cyprian, Babylonian, or Egyptian, does not here concern us[1]; the practices were in origin foreign to Greece, and the ancients, in referring the invention of them to Delphus, son of Poseidon, to Prometheus, to Sisyphus, or to Orpheus[2], were guilty not only of sheer fabrication but of manifest anachronism[3]. Homer convicts them.

It is then the foreign origin of these methods of divination which explains the attitude of the ancient Greeks towards them. It was a practice, not a theory—a custom, not an idea—a conglomeration of usages, not a coherent and reasoned system—which was introduced from abroad. The Greeks accepted it readily as furnishing them with one more means to that communion with their gods which to them was a spiritual necessity. The principle of the machinery employed was unknown to them; but what matter? Its operation was commended by the experience of others and soon tested by their own. The unknown principle long continued to excite interest, conjecture, speculation, among the educated and enlightened, but their failures to reach any final and unanimous conclusion never moved them to dispute the tested fact. And if this was the attitude of the educated, the common-folk of those days must surely have been in the same position as the people of to-day—gladly accepting the usage and avowedly ignorant of the principle. Such blind acquiescence during so many centuries may seem indeed a disparagement of the Greeks' intelligence; but it is equally a testimonial to their religious faith;

[1] For authorities on this point see Bouché Leclercq, *op. cit.* I. p. 170.
[2] Cf. *ibid.* p. 169.
[3] K. O. Müller (*die Etrusker*, II. p. 187) places the introduction of the custom in the sixth century B.C.

it is the things which defy reasoning that are best worth believing; and among these the Greeks have steadfastly numbered the writing of divine counsels on the sacrificial victim's inward parts.

The actual methods now pursued are also an inheritance from the ancient world. The animal from which the Klephts a century ago are said to have taken omens most successfully was the sheep, and the portion of its anatomy on which the tokens of the future were to be read was the shoulder-blade. The questions to which an answer was most often sought were, as might be surmised from the life of the enquirers, questions of war. 'In this connexion,' says a Greek writer[1] of the first half of last century, when stories of the Klephts' life might still be heard from their own lips, 'the shoulder-blade of a young lamb is...a veritable Sibylline book; for its condition enables men to ascertain beforehand the issue of an important engagement, the serious losses on each side, the strength of the enemy, the reinforcements to be expected, and indeed the very moment when danger threatens'; and he recounts, by way of illustration, the story of a Thessalian band of Klephts, whose captain, in the security of his own fastness, was sitting divining in this way; suddenly he sprang up with the exclamation, 'The Turks have caught us alive,' and at the head of his troop had only just time to break through the Turkish forces which were already surrounding them.

That this method of divination was derived directly and with little deviation from the old system of inspecting shoulder-blades (*ὠμοπλατοσκοπία*) as known to Michael Psellus can hardly be doubted. 'If the question be of war,' he says, 'a patch of red observed on the right side of the shoulder-blade, or a long dark line on the left, foreshows a great war; but if both sides present their normal white appearance, it is an omen of peace to come[2].'

But the days of patriot-outlaws are over now, and the questions submitted to the arbitrament of ovine shoulder-blades are of more peaceful bent. It is the shepherd now, and not the warrior, who thus resolves the uncertainties of the future. It is the vicissitudes of weather, not of war, that interest him; the birth of lambs, not the death of Turks. It is of plague, pestilence, and famine threatening his flock, not of battle and murder and sudden death

[1] Bybilakis, *Neugriechisches Leben*, p. 49 (1840).
[2] *Περὶ ὠμοπλατοσκοπίας καὶ οἰωνοσκοπίας*, § 1.

for himself, that he seeks forewarning. But the same instrument of divination supplies the answers.

My own knowledge of its use is obtained entirely from Acarnania and Aetolia; but the practice is also recorded from Zagorion in Epirus[1], and prevails too, I have been told, among the shepherds of Elis. The opportunity for it is, as I have said, offered only by certain feast-days, when the peasants indulge in meat. On other occasions, when the shepherds kill only in order to sell in the towns, divination cannot be undertaken; for it is only after cooking that the meat can be properly removed from the bone so as to leave it clean and legible. There is therefore no doubt an economical reason for confining this practice to certain religious festivals; but this consideration must not be allowed to obscure the genuinely religious character of the rite itself. In Zagorion, at the festivals in honour of the patron-saint of each village or monastery, sheep are brought and slain in the enclosure of the particular sanctuary, and are called *κουρμπάνια*[2], a plural evidently of the Hebrew word 'corban,' a thing devoted to the service of God; thus both name and ceremony proclaim this custom a genuine survival of sacrifice; and it is apparently from the shoulder-blades of these victims that omens are drawn[3]. A similar case of divination by sacrifice came to my knowledge in Boeotia, though whether the shoulder-blade or some other part of the victim furnished the predictions, I could not ascertain. While looking round a small museum at Skimitári I had happened to stop before a relief representing a man leading some animal to sacrifice, and heard the custodian, a peasant of the place, remark to another peasant, evidently a stranger to the district, who had followed me in, 'That is just like what we do'; and he then explained that at a church of St George, somewhere in the neighbourhood, there was an annual festival at which a similar scene took place. The villagers of the country-side congregate early on the morning of St George's day round the church,

[1] *Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά*, p. 210. No details are given.

[2] *Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά*, p. 176.

[3] The writer does not actually mention the two things in connexion. He belongs to that class of modern Greek writers who exhibit their own intellectual emancipation by deploring or deriding popular superstitions, and wastes so much energy therein that he fails to note such points of interest. But, since it is not probable that the peasants of Epirus eat meat more often than other Greek peasants, the connexion of the sacrifice and the divination may, I think, be assumed.

each man bringing a kid or a lamb; service in the church having been duly performed, the priest comes out and blesses each of the animals in turn, after which they are killed and roasted and a feast is held accompanied by some kind of divination from the victims. Such in brief was the custodian's account; but, when I intervened in the conversation with a question about the method of divining, he would say nothing more. The Boeotians are still boorish. But what I had already overheard exhibits clearly enough the religious character of the rite; and I do not doubt that in Aetolia and Acarnania also the peasants handle the sheep's shoulder-blade in an equally religious mood. Their very indulgence in meat is due to the religious occasion; much more therefore the divination which reveals to them the mind of those powers whom they worship.

In the art of interpreting the particular marks upon the shoulder-blade I cannot claim to be an adept. The few facts which I managed to discover were that in general spots and blurs upon the bone are prognostications adverse to the hopes of the enquirer, and that a clean white surface always gives full security: that different portions of the bone are scrutinised for answers to different classes of questions; thus the prospects of the lambing season are indicated on the projecting ridge of the bone, and the weather-forecast on the flat surfaces on either side of it, marks on the right side (the bone being held horizontally with what is naturally its upper end towards the diviner) being favourable signs, and those on the left ill-omened: and finally that a pestilence is foreshown by a depression in the surface of the bone. The science, I was told, is extremely complex and elaborate; but I never had the fortune to meet any peasant who was considered an expert in it; the best exponents of it are to be found among the mountain shepherds, and since these are constantly shifting their grazing grounds it is no easy matter to fall in with one both able and willing to unfold the full mysteries of the art. How to distinguish in interpretation markings of different sizes, shapes, and colours I never discovered[1].

But the little which I learnt agrees in the main with the

[1] Certain details of the art as practised in Macedonia are given by Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 96. But, as they may in part be due to Albanian influence there, I have not made use of them.

ancient method as described by Michael Psellus[1]. 'Those,' he says, 'who wish to avail themselves of this means of divination, pick out a sheep or lamb from the flock, and, after settling in their mind or saying aloud the question which they wish to ask, slay the victim and remove the shoulder-blade from the carcase. This—the organ of divination as they think—they bake thoroughly upon hot embers, and having stripped it of the flesh find on it the tokens of that issue about which they are enquiring. The answers to different kinds of questions are learnt from different parts[2]. Questions of life or death are decided by the projection of the ridge[3]; if this is clean and white on both sides, a promise of life is thereby given; but if it is blurred, it is a token of death. Weather-forecasts again are made from inspection of the middle part of the shoulder-blade; if the two membrane-like surfaces which form the middle of the shoulder-blade on either side of the ridge[4] are white and clean, they indicate calm weather to come; while, if they are thickly spotted, the reverse is to be expected.' Here, it will have been noticed, no mention is made of any discrimination between the markings on the right and on the left sides of the bone; but this, I suspect, is an omission on the part of Psellus, for so simple a principle of ancient divination is hardly likely to have been excluded from consideration in this case. In other respects the information which I obtained tallies closely with his account; the clean and white appearance of the bone was then, as it is now, a reassuring omen; then, as now, the prospects of the weather were to be learnt from the flat surface on either side of the ridge; then, as now, the question of life or death, which from the shepherd's point of view becomes most acute at each lambing season, was settled by reference to the ridge of the bone. To judge then from the few principles of the art known to me, divination from the shoulder-blade, besides being still recognised as a religious rite, is conducted on the

[1] Περὶ ὠμοπλατοσκοπίας κ.τ.λ. *l. c.*

[2] Reading ἄλλα γὰρ for ἀλλὰ γὰρ of Codex Vindobonensis, as published in *Philologus*, 1853, p. 166.

[3] The word is ῥάχις. This in relation to the body generally means the 'spine,' but can be used of any ridge (as of a hill), and so here, I suppose, of the ridge of bone along the shoulder-blade.

[4] So I understand the somewhat obscure sentence, εἰ μὲν γὰρ μεταξὺ τοῦ ὠμοπλάτου δύο ὑμένες ἐξ ἀμφοτέρων μερῶν τῆς ῥάχεως κ.τ.λ., conjecturing οἱ before μεταξὺ, where Codex Vindob. has corruptly εἰ.

same lines by Aetolian and Acarnanian peasants as it was by those ancient augurs to whose hand-books probably Psellus was indebted for his knowledge.

Another animal utilised in the same district for purposes of divination is the pig; but in this case the prophetic organ is not the shoulder-blade but the spleen. This is removed from the fresh carcase before the rest of the flesh is cut up or cooked in any way, and omens are taken from the roughness or discoloration of its surface. The questions which may be decided by this means are very various—the prospects of weather, of crops, and of vineyards, the success of journeys and other enterprises, the advisability of a contemplated marriage, and so forth. Of the exact details of the art I know even less than in the last case; the facts which I learned were these, that a smooth surface is a good omen, just as it was in the case of other internal organs in the time of Aeschylus[1], while certain roughnesses portend obstacles and difficulties in a journey or enterprise, and further that certain abnormal blotches of colour give warning of blight and mildew on crops and vines. Proficiency in the science, I was told, is commonest among the inhabitants of the low-lying cultivated or wooded districts of Acarnania where large herds of half-wild swine are kept; and hence it is natural that the predictions sought in this way are chiefly concerned with agricultural and social interests, whereas the omens obtained from the sheep's shoulder-blade by shepherds living solitary lives in the mountains deal with few issues other than the prospects of the flock. But this difference between the two methods of divination is circumstantial rather than essential; either method can, I believe, in the hands of experts be used for answering almost any questions.

Divination from the pig's spleen is, I think, undoubtedly ancient. It appears to be a solitary survival of the *σπλαγχνοσκοπία*, or 'inspection of entrails,' which in ancient Greece would seem to have been the commonest method of divining from the sacrificial victim. Among the animals embarrassed with prophetic entrails the pig indeed was not ordinarily reckoned; but Pausanias mentions that the people of Cyprus discovered its value[2], and

[1] *Prom. Vinct.* 493.

[2] Pausan. VI. 2. 5.

it seems actually to have furnished responses to the highly reputable oracle of Paphos[1]. How it has come to pass that modern Acarnania should preserve a custom peculiar to ancient Cyprus, is a problem that I cannot solve; but it can hardly be questioned that here again we have an old religious rite still maintained as a proven means of communion with those powers in whose knowledge lies the future.

Divination from sacrifice also forms part of the preliminaries of a wedding in many districts. On the day before the actual ceremony[2] the first animal for the feast is killed by the bridegroom with his own hand. The proper victim is a young ram, though in case of poverty a more humble substitute is permitted. This, after being in some districts blessed by the priest who receives in return a portion of the victim, is made to stand facing eastward, and the bridegroom endeavours to slaughter it with a single blow of an axe. Omens for the marriage are taken from the manner and the direction in which the blood spirts out; and a further investigation is sometimes made as to whether the tongue is bitten or the mouth foaming, each sign finding its own interpretation in the lore of the village cronies[3]. The substitute allowed for the ram is a cock. Where the peasants avail themselves of this economy, the killing is usually deferred until after the wedding service, and is performed on the doorstep of the bridegroom's house before the bride is led in. The bird is held down on the threshold by the best man, and the bridegroom, having been provided with a sharp axe, tries to sever the cock's neck at one blow. Here too the man's dexterity counts for something; for the peace or the agony in which the victim is despatched belongs to that class of omens which in antiquity also were drawn from the demeanour of the animal before and during the act of sacrifice, and were taken not indeed to furnish a detailed answer to any question preferred but to indicate the acceptance or the rejection of the offering and the accompanying petitions. It is however the effusion of blood and the muscular convulsions of the decapitated bird which are most keenly observed; for from

[1] Tatian, *adv. Graecos*, 1. Cf. Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divin.* 1. p. 170.

[2] In Zagorion in Epirus, the ram is sacrificed on the entrance of the bride to her new home (cf. the sacrifice of a cock mentioned below). Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγορια κά, p. 183.

[3] Curtius Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im Neuen*, p. 86.

these signs, I was told, the old women of the village profess to determine such points of interest as the chastity of the bride, the supremacy of the husband or the wife in the future *ménage*, and the number and sex of children to be born. All this information can in most places where the rite prevails be obtained without any dissection of the victim such as would have been customary in antiquity; but in Aetolia and Acarnania the peasants continue faithful to what are probably ancient methods even in this detail; there the breast-bone of the fowl is treated both at weddings and on other religious occasions as a poor man's legitimate substitute for the ovine shoulder-blade, which it sufficiently resembles in the possession of a ridge with flat surfaces on either side suitable for divine inscriptions.

But it is not upon coincidences of practical detail, instructive as they are in proving the unity of modern with ancient Greece, that I wish most to insist. If it is clear that the victims often blest by the priests at weddings and on other religious occasions are really felt by the people to be sacrifices, then the practice of divining from them, whatever the exact method pursued, is once more distinct evidence of the belief that the powers above are able and willing to hold close communion with men.

Among the minor methods of divination we may notice first what Suidas calls *οἰκοσκοπικόν* or 'domestic divination'; under this head he includes such incidents as the appearance of a weasel on the roof, or of a snake, the spilling of oil, honey, wine, water, or ashes, and the crackling of logs on the fire. The subject was expounded apparently in a serious treatise by one Xenocrates; but it is difficult to suppose that there was any scientific system governing so heterogeneous a conglomeration of incidents; the treatise was probably no more than a compilation of possible occurrences with disconnected regulations for interpreting each of them.

Many events of a like trivial nature are observed at the present day, and the interpretations set upon some of them are demonstrably ancient. A weasel seen about the house, just as on the road, is significant of evil[1], more especially if there is in the household a girl about to be married; for the weasel

[1] In Macedonia the weasel is said on the contrary to be a good omen. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 108.

(*νυφίτσα*) was once, it is said, a maiden destined to become, as the name implies, a 'little bride,' but in some way she was robbed of her happiness and transformed into an animal; its appearance therefore augurs ill for an intended wedding. A snake on the contrary is of good omen when seen in the house; for it is the guardian-*genius* watching over its own. The orientation of a cat when engaged in washing its face indicates the point of the compass from which wind may be expected. A mouse nibbling a hole in a bag of flour is in Zagorion[1] as distressing a portent as it was to the superstitious man of Theophrastus[2]. A dog howling at night in or near the house portends a death in the neighbourhood, as it did in the time of Theocritus: 'Hark,' cries Simaetha, 'the dogs are barking through the town. Hecate is at the cross-ways. Haste, clash the brazen cymbals[3]'; only instead of the cymbals it is customary to use an ejaculation addressed to the dog, 'may you burst' (*νὰ σκάσῃς*), or 'may you eat your own head' (*νὰ φᾶς τὸ κεφάλι σου*).

Again, to take another class of the domestic incidents mentioned by Suidas, the spilling of oil is universally an evil omen, and the spilling of wine a good omen; the former foreshadows poverty, the latter plenty. The upsetting of water is also a presage of good success, especially on a journey; but in this connexion, as a later chapter will show, it often passes out of the sphere of divination, which should rest on purely fortuitous occurrences, into that of sympathetic magic.

The crackling of logs on the fire, which Suidas mentions, remains to-day also an incident to be duly noted. Generally it appears to mean that good news is coming or that a friend is arriving, but, if sparks and ashes are thrown out into the room, troubles and anxieties must be expected. The spluttering of a lamp or candle also usually foretells misfortune[4]. Omens as to marriage also may be obtained on the domestic hearth. Two leaves of basil are put together upon a live coal; if they lie as they are placed and burn away quietly, the marriage will be harmonious; if there is a certain amount of crackling, the married

[1] Λαμπρίδης, Ζαγοριακά, p. 203.
[2] Theophr. *Char.* 16.
[3] Theocr. *Id.* II. 35.
[4] So too in antiquity apparently according to Propertius IV. (V.) 3. 60; Ovid (*Heroid.* XIX. 151) on the contrary reckons it a good omen.

life of the two persons represented by the leaves will be disturbed by quarrels; if the leaves crackle fiercely and leap apart, there is an incompatibility of temper which renders the projected alliance undesirable.

These are but a few instances of domestic divination, and a much longer list might easily be compiled. But while I know that many of the peasants do indeed observe such occurrences seriously enough to act upon the supernatural warnings thereby conveyed, yet the religious character of these methods of divination is less demonstrable than that of divination from birds or from sacrifice; and I may content myself with indicating, by a few illustrations only, the continuity of Greek superstition in both this and those other minor branches of divination to which I now pass.

Palmistry, according to Suidas, was an ancient art, and a hand-book of it was composed by one Helenos. The signs of the future were read in the lines of the palm and of the fingers as in modern palmistry. This science is still kept up by some of the old women in Greece, but real proficiency therein is as in other countries chiefly attained by the gypsies (*ἀτσίγγανοι*), who follow a nomadic life in the mountains and have very little intercourse with the native population.

Divination from involuntary movements of various parts of the body—*παλμικόν*, as Suidas calls it, on which one Poseidonios was a leading authority—is still very generally practised, and evidently has deviated hardly at all from ancient lines. The twitching of a man's eye or eyebrow is a sign that he will soon see some acquaintance—an enemy, if it be the left eye that throbs, a friend, if it be the right; and this clearly was the principle which the goat-herd of Theocritus followed when he exclaimed, 'My eye throbs, my right eye; oh! shall I see Amaryllis herself?'[1] Similarly the buzzing or singing of a man's ears is an indication that he is being spoken of by others, just as it was in the time of Lucian[2]; and, according to the usual principle, the right ear is affected in this manner by praise and kindly speech,

[1] Theocr. *Id.* III. 37 *ἄλλεται ὀφθαλμός μευ ὁ δεξιός· ἆρά γ' ἰδησῶ | αὐτάν*; the order of the words, it will be seen, justifies the emphasis which I have given to *δεξιός* and to *αὐτάν*.

[2] *Dialog. Meretric.* 9. 2.

the left by backbiting and slander. Again, if the palm of the right hand itch, it shows that a man will receive money; and reversely, if the left palm itch, he will have to pay money away[1]. So too, if the sole of the right or of the left foot itch, it is a premonition of a journey successful or unsuccessful. Omens of this kind fall with uncomfortable frequency to the lot of those who have to find a night's lodging in Greek inns or cottages.

To the same category belong hiccoughing and sneezing. The hiccough (λόξυγγας), as also in Macedonia choking over food or drink[2], is a sign that some backbiter is at work, and the method of curing it is to guess his name. Sneezing is a favourable omen, but the particular interpretation of it depends on alternative sets of circumstances. If anyone who is speaking is interrupted by a sneeze, whether his own or that of another person present, whatever he is saying is held to be proved true by the occurrence. Γειά σου, cry the listeners, καὶ ἀλήθεια λές (or λέει), 'Health to you, and you speak (*or* he speaks) truth.' If however no one present is in the act of speaking when the sneeze is heard, the first phrase only is used, 'Health to you,' or by way of facetious variant, νὰ ψοφήσῃ ἡ πεθερά σου, 'May your mother-in-law die like a dog[3].' In either case the prayer for good health can benefit only the sneezer; but in the former, that member of the company who is speaking at the time may obtain corroboration of the statement which he is making from the omen produced by another. This part of the belief is very strongly held; and anyone who is in the unfortunate position of having his word doubted or of being compelled to prevaricate will be better advised to conjure up a sneeze than to expostulate or to swear.

Both these interpretations of sneezing date from ancient times. The old equivalent of 'Health to you' was Ζεῦ σῶσον, 'Preserve him, Zeus'; but such expressions are common to many nations and not distinctively Hellenic. The other interpretation of sneezing, as a confirmation of words which are being uttered, is of more special interest, and has been handed down from the

[1] The significance of right and left in this case is reversed in Macedonia (cf. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 112). But in all these instances I am only giving what I have found to be the commonest form of the superstition in Greece as a whole.

[2] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 111.

[3] The word ψοφῶ is properly used only of the dying of animals.

Homeric age. 'Let but Odysseus come,' says Penelope, 'and reach his native land, and soon will he and his son requite the violent deeds of these men.' 'Thus she spake,' continues the passage, 'and Telemachos sneezed aloud; and round about the house rang fearfully; and Penelope laughed, and quickly then she spake winged words to Eumaeus: "Go now, call the stranger here before me. Dost thou not see how my son did sneeze in sanction of all my words[1]? For this should utter death come upon the suitors one and all, nor should one of them escape death and destruction[2]."'

Among other instruments of divination occasionally used are eggs, molten lead, and sieves. Eggs are chiefly used to decide the prospects of a marriage. 'Speechless water'[3] is fetched by a boy, and the old woman who presides over such operations pours into it the white of an egg. If this keeps together in a close mass, the marriage will turn out well; but if it assumes a broken or confused shape, troubles loom ahead. In antiquity the science was probably more extended; for a work on egg-divining (*ὠοσκοπικά*) was attributed to Orpheus. A similar rite may be performed with molten lead instead of white of egg, and it suffices to pour it upon any flat surface[4]. Divination with a sieve—the ancient *κοσκινομαντεία*—also continues, I have been told, but I know no details of the practice.

Thus then the chief methods of learning the gods' will as practised in antiquity have been reviewed, and are found to be perpetuated in substantially the same form down to the present day; and not only is the form the same but in many of them the same religious spirit is manifest. The principal difference lies in the paucity of professional diviners now; experts assuredly in some branches there still are, but augury alone would now, I think, be a precarious source of livelihood. Advice from the village priest would in so many cases be cheaper and no less valued than that of the soothsayer.

And as with persons so with places. The pagan temples in which oracles were given have been largely superseded by Christian churches, and possibly the peasants are more inclined to pay for

[1] *ἐπέπταρε πᾶσιν ἔπεσσιν.*
[2] Hom. *Od.* XVII. 539 ff. Cf. Xenoph. *Anab.* III. 2. 9 and Catull. XLV. 9 and 18.
[3] See above, p. 304.
[4] Καμπούρογλου, Ἱστ. τῶν Ἀθηναίων, III. p. 22.

masses which will secure the fulfilment of their wishes than for oracular responses which may run counter to them. Still even so oracles have not yet entirely ceased; and in discussing those which survive we shall find once more a coincidence both in form and spirit between ancient and modern Greek religion.

An oracle, it must be remembered, is simply a place set apart for the practice of divination; the method of obtaining responses has always varied in different places, and the mediation of a professional diviner, though usual, cannot be regarded as essential[1]. Those caves therefore where women make offerings of honey-cakes to the Fates[2] and pray for the fulfilment of their conjugal hopes are really oracles, provided that there is some means of learning there whether the prayer is accepted or rejected. And this is often the case; most commonly the answer is inferred —on what principle of interpretation, I do not know—from the dripping of water or the detachment and fall from the roof of a particle of stone; and in Aetolia I was told of a cave in the neighbourhood of Agrinion in which the nature of the response is determined by the behaviour of the bats which frequent it. If they remain hanging quiescent from the roof and walls, the suppliant's hopes will be realised; but if they be disturbed by his or, more often, her intrusion and flutter round confusedly, the Fates are inexorably adverse.

But besides these modest and unpretentious oracles there still survives in the island of Amorgos an oracle of a higher order ensconced in a church and served by a priest. The saint under whose patronage this pagan institution has continued to flourish is St George, here surnamed Balsamites[3]. To the right on entering the church is seen a large squared block of marble hollowed out so as to have the form of an urn inside, and highly polished. It stands apparently on the natural rock, and is roofed over with a dome-shaped lid capable of being locked. At the present day the mouth of the urn is also covered by a marble slab with a hole pierced through it and fitted with a plug; but this was not observed by travellers of the seventeenth century and is probably

[1] e.g. at the oracle of Hermes Agoraeus at Pherae the enquirer performed the whole ceremony required and obtained his response without the intervention of any priest or seer. Cf. above, p. 305.

[2] See above, p. 121.

[3] See above, p. 55.

a recent addition. There is also a discrepancy in the various accounts of the working of the oracle, the older authorities stating that the answers were given by the rise and fall of the water in the vessel, while the modern custom is to interpret the signs given by particles of dust, insects, hairs, bits of dry leaf, and such-like floating in a cupful of water drawn from the urn[1].

The description given by a Jesuit priest of Santorini, Robert Sauger by name, of what he himself witnessed in Amorgos towards the end of the seventeenth century may be taken as trustworthy, inasmuch as he elsewhere shows himself an accurate observer and certainly was not tempted in the present case to exaggerate the wonders of the rival Church.

'The cavity,' he says, 'fills itself with water and empties itself of its own accord, and it is impossible to imagine what gives the water this motion and where it has a passage; for, besides being very thick, the marble is so highly polished inside and its continuity of surface is so unbroken that it is impossible to detect the tiniest hole or the least unevenness, saving always the opening at the top which is always kept locked. Additionally astonishing is the fact that within the space of one hour the urn fills and empties itself visibly several times; at one moment you see it so full that the water overflows, and a moment afterwards it becomes so dry that it appears to have had no water in it at all.

'Superstition is rife everywhere. Any Greeks who have a voyage to make do not fail to come and consult the Urn. If the water is high in it, they set off gaily, promising themselves a good passage. But if the Urn is without water, or the water is low in it, they draw therefrom a bad omen for the success of their journey, and do not go, or, if business makes it imperative, go unwillingly.

'This alleged miracle, which is so famed throughout all Greece, is a source of much gain to the priest who has charge of the Church of St George; for the concourse of Greeks there is incessant; people come thither from great distances, some in all seriousness to advise themselves of the future, others to see the thing with their own eyes, and a certain number to amuse them-

[1] Cf. an article by Ἀντ. Μηλιαράκης, *τὸ ἐν Ἀμοργῷ Μαντεῖον τοῦ Ἁγίου Γεωργίου τοῦ Βαλσαμίτου*, in *Περιοδικὸν τῆς Ἑστίας*, no. 411, 13th Nov. 1883.

selves and to have a laugh, as I have had several times, at the credulity of these folk[1].'

Whatever may have been the original method of oracular response—and I suspect that, while the presence or the absence of water furnished a plain 'yea' or 'nay' to the enquirer, a more detailed reply always depended upon the observation and interpretation of any foreign particles floating in the urn—the faith of the people in its virtue is still intense. It can indeed no longer claim a reputation throughout all Greece; but the inhabitants of Amorgos and the maritime population of neighbouring islands still consult it regularly and seriously concerning voyages, business matters, marriage, and other cares and interests; nor are questioners from farther afield altogether unknown.

This oracular property of water was well known in antiquity. In this branch of divination, says Bouché Leclercq, use was made 'of springs and streams which were felt to be endowed with a kind of supernatural discernment. Certain waters were accorded the property of confirming oaths and exposing perjury. The water of the Styx, by which the Olympian gods swore, is the prototype of these means of test, among which may be mentioned the spring of Zeus Orkios, near Tyane, and the water-oracle of the Sicilian Palici[2].' So too water-deities such as Nereus and Proteus were believed to exercise special prophetic powers; and Ino possessed in the neighbourhood of Epidaurus Limera a pool into which barley-cakes were thrown by those who would consult her; if these offerings sank, she was held to have accepted them and to favour the enquirer; if they floated, his hopes would be disappointed[3].

The present oracle of Amorgos is of a higher order than this; its method is more complex, and its responses are more detailed. It should surely have ranked high even among the oracles of old, of which, both in the reverence which it inspires and in the medium which it employs, it is a true descendant.

Having thus examined the means by which the gods deign to

[1] Le Père Robert (Sauger), *Histoire nouvelle des anciens ducs et autres souverains de l'Archipel* (Paris, 1699) pp. 196—198. Cf. Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, I. pp. 281 ff.; Sonnini de Magnoncourt, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie*, vol. I. p. 290.

[2] Bouché Leclercq, *Hist. de la Divin.* I. p. 187.

[3] Pausan. III. 23. 8.

communicate with men, and having seen that both in form and in spirit the ancient means of communion have been preserved almost unchanged, we have now to consider the means by which men approach the gods and communicate to them their hopes and petitions.

The first and most obvious method, one common to all religions, is of course prayer; but the use of this channel just because it is so universal cannot be claimed as a proof of religious unity between ancient and modern Greece. It is rather in what we should deem the accompaniments of prayer that evidence of such unity must be sought. The ancient Greeks were not in general content with prayer only. It was not customary to approach the gods empty-handed. The poor man indeed, according to Lucian[1], appeased the god merely by kissing his right hand; but the farmer brought an ox from the plough, the shepherd a lamb, the goat-herd a goat, and others incense or a cake. 'Thus it looks,' he says, 'as if the gods do nothing at all *gratis*, but offer their commodities for sale to men; one may buy of them health, for instance, at the cost of a calf, wealth for four oxen, a kingdom for a hecatomb, a safe return passage from Ilium to Pylos for nine bulls, and the crossing from Aulis to Ilium for a princess—a high price certainly, but then Hecuba was bidding Athene twelve cows and a dress to keep Ilium safe. One must suppose however that they have plenty of things to dispose of at the price of a cock, a garland, or even a stick of incense[2].' That this is a fair account of the externals of Greek ritual can hardly be questioned; for Plato too, in more serious mood, says that 'the mutual communion between gods and men' is established by 'sacrifices of all kinds and the various departments of divination[3].' The 'various departments of divination' are clearly the means by which the gods communicate with men; and 'sacrifices of all kinds' therefore represented to Plato's mind the means by which men communicate with their gods. Prayer, he seems to have felt, was a necessary incident in sacrifice, rather than sacrifice an unnecessary adjunct to prayer.

Now the word *θυσία*, which we commonly translate 'sacrifice,' was a term of very wide meaning in ancient Greek. In Homer the word *θύειν* was used of making any offering to the gods, and

[1] *De sacrificiis*, p. 12. [2] *Ibid.* cap. 2. [3] Plato, *Sympos.* p. 188.

never denoted, though naturally it sometimes connoted, the slaughtering of animals—an act properly expressed by the verb *σφάζειν*. And in later times the substantive *θυσία* was still applied to almost any religious festival, at which undoubtedly some offerings, but not necessarily animal sacrifices, were always made. When therefore Plato speaks of *θυσίαι πᾶσαι*, 'all sacrifices,' he is clearly expressing his recognition of the fact that sacrifices (*θυσίαι*) are manifold in kind—and if in kind, therefore also in intention; for different rituals are the expressions of different religious motives. Communion with the gods was in general terms the object of all offerings made to them by men; but the particular aspect of such communion varied.

Offerings, we may suppose, were rarely if ever made purely for the benefit of the gods without any self-seeking on the part of the worshipper. Even when a sacrifice to some god was merely a pretext for social entertainments—and how frequently this was the case is shown by the fact that *φιλοθύτης*, 'fond of sacrificing,' came to mean simply 'hospitable'—it is reasonable to suppose that the presentation to the god of the less edible portions of the victim was accompanied at least by an *ἵλαθι*, 'be propitious,' by way of grace before the meal; and at more strictly religious functions, at which the guests, if there were any, were secondary to the god, the dedication of the offering undoubtedly included a declaration of the offerer's motive.

As regards the character of that motive in most cases, Lucian is right; it was frankly and baldly commercial. Homer does not blink the fact; for Phoenix even commends to the notice of Achilles the open mind displayed by the gods towards an open-handed suppliant. 'Verily even the gods may be turned, they whose excellence and honour and strength are greater than thine; yet even them do men, when they pray, turn from their purpose with offerings of incense and pleasant vows, with fat and the savour of sacrifice, whensoever a man hath transgressed and done amiss[1].' And so Greek feeling has ever remained. Offerings are the ordinary means of gaining access to the gods, of buying their goodwill and buying off their anger. The ordinary medium of exchange in such commerce was, when Greece was avowedly pagan,

[1] Hom. *Il.* IX. 497 ff.

food, and is, now that Greece is nominally Christian, candles: for religion, ever conservative, keeps up the otherwise obsolete system of barter between men and gods, even though the priests of those gods are enlightened enough to accept of a secular modern currency. But the particular commodities in which the barter is made are of little consequence as compared with the spirit which has always animated such dealings. The substitution of candles for meat is practically the only modification which Christianity has effected in this department of religion.

Even this change in detail does not affect the whole range of such operations; candles are not by any means the only offerings of which the Church takes cognisance. In dealing with the question of divination, we have seen cases in which on some religious occasion, saint's-day or wedding, the priest blesses a genuinely sacrificial victim[1]. We have seen too that at the laying of foundation stones, a religious ceremony conducted by a priest of the Church, some animal is immolated to appease the *genius* of the site[2]. We have seen again how the Church permits or encourages the dedication of those silver-foil models of various objects—ships and houses, corn-fields and vineyards, eyes and limbs—which serve at once to propitiate the saint to whom they are offered and, on the principle of sympathetic magic, to place the object, thus represented as it were by proxy, under the saint's special care; and how also the same kind of models are frequently dedicated as thank-offerings[3]; so that indeed, in default of an inscription announcing the motive of the offerer, no one can decide how any given offerings of this kind should be classified[4].

Then too in those religious rites which have survived without ecclesiastical sanction the use and the purpose of food-offerings remain unchanged. The favour of the Fates is bought by offerings of cakes in order that they may bestow upon the women who thus propitiate them the blessing of children[5]. Nereids who have 'seized' children are known to withdraw their oft-times baneful influence when the mother takes a present of food to the

[1] See above, pp. 322–3 and 326.
[2] See above, p. 265.
[3] See above, pp. 58–9.
[4] Ancient offerings of this type, as found at Epidaurus, should not I think be grouped all together as thank-offerings; many of them belonged probably to the propitiatory class.
[5] See above, p. 121.

scene of the calamity and cries to them with an Homeric simplicity, 'Eat ye the little cakes, good queens, and heal my child[1].' Even the malice of Callicantzari may sometimes be averted by a present of pork[2].

Thus with or without the ratification of the Church the old offerings still continue to be made in the self-same form; and even where other substitutes have been devised, the spirit which animates the dedication of them is unchanged—a spirit essentially commercial; it matters little whether the suppliant is trying to buy blessings or to get the punishment which he has deserved commuted for a fine, or again whether he is speculating in future favours or settling in accordance with a vow for favours received; in each case there is the *quid pro quo*, the bargaining that the Greek has never been able to forego, not even in his religion.

But while the spirit thus manifested is not wholly admirable and perhaps deserved the ridicule of Lucian, it is highly instructive. The sacrifices or offerings are the means by which the worshipper gets into touch with the worshipped, the vehicle for his thanks or petitions; the possibility of bargaining implies intercourse; commerce is a form, even though it be the lowest form, of communion.

But that there were other kinds of sacrifice which represented higher aspects of the communion between men and gods in ancient Greece is certain. The commonly accepted classification of ancient sacrifices recognises three main groups—the sacramental, the honorific, and the piacular. Of the sacramental class, in which—by a development, it appears, of totemism—some sacred animal, representing the anthropomorphic god who has superseded it in men's worship, is consumed by the worshippers in order that by eating the flesh and drinking the blood they may partake of the god's own life and self, no trace, so far as I know, can now be found in the popular religion. The honorific class comprises the majority of those offerings which might with less euphemism be called commercial; those however which are prompted by the desire to expiate sin, or rather to buy off the punishment which sin has merited, would, I suppose, fall under the head of piacular. But the line drawn between the honorific and the piacular seems to

[1] See above, p. 145. [2] See above, p. 201.

me far from clear, for reasons which will be discussed in the remainder of this chapter.

The view of sacrifice which I am about to propound, and which would modify chiefly our conception of so-called piacular sacrifice in antiquity, was suggested to me by a story which I had from the lips of an aged peasant of the village of Goniá (the 'Corner') in the island of Santorini[1]. In talking to me of the wonders of his native island he mentioned among other things a large hall with columns round it which had long since been buried—presumably by volcanic eruption. This hall was of magnificent proportions, 'as fine,' to use the old man's own description, 'as the *piazza* of Syra or even of Athens.' It was situated between Kamári, an old rock-cut shelter in the shape of an *exedra* at the foot of the northern descent from the one mountain of the island (*μέσο βουνί*), and a chapel of St George in the strip of plain that forms the island's east coast. So far my informant's veracity is beyond dispute; for in an account of the island written by a resident Jesuit in the middle of the seventeenth century I afterwards discovered the following corroboration[2]. 'At the foot of this mountain[3] are seen the ruins of a fine ancient town; the huge massive stones of which the walls were built are a marvel to behold; it must have taken some stout arms and portentous hands to handle them....Among these ruins have been found some fine marble columns perfectly complete, and some rich tombs; and among others there are four which would bear comparison in point of beauty with those of our kings, if they were not damaged; several marble statues in Roman style lie overturned upon the ground. On the pedestal of the statue of Trajan there is still to be read at the present day a very fine Greek panegyric of that powerful Emperor, as also on that of the statue of Marcus Antoninus.' Thus much as guarantee of the old man's *bona fides*, which even excavation on the spot, however desirable from an archaeological standpoint, could not more clearly establish than the French writer's corroborative testimony; now for the story associated by the aged narrator with this wonderful buried hall.

[1] Formerly (and again latterly) called Thera.

[2] Le père Richard, *Relation de ce qui s'est passé à Sant-Erini*, p. 23.

[3] Called by him *ὄρος τοῦ ἁγίου Στεφάνου*; but the fact that there is only this one mountain in the island and that it still has a chapel of St Stephen on it places the identification beyond all doubt.

At the time of the revolution, he said, a number of the Greek ships assembled off Kamári (where a fair anchorage exists), and he with some fellow-islanders all since dead was going to fight in the cause of Greek freedom. Naturally enough there was great excitement and trepidation in this remote and quiet island at the thought of adventure and war. 'So we thought things over,' he continued, 'and decided to send a man to St Nicolas to ask him that our ships might prosper in the war[1].' They accordingly seized a man and took him to this large hall. There they cut off his head and his hands, and carried him down the steps into the hall, whereupon God appeared with a bright torch in his hand, and the bearers of the body dropped it, and all present fled in terror.

There are few grounds on which to argue for or against the credibility of this story. Historically Thera along with some other islands is recorded to have maintained the position of a neutral by paying contributions to both sides; but that does not in any way militate against the supposition that a few young men from the island were patriotic enough to volunteer for service in some of the Greek ships which may have touched—perhaps to secure that contribution—at Santorini. The story itself was narrated to me, I am persuaded, in all good faith, and the old man really believed himself to have taken part in the events described. His age would certainly have permitted him to fight as a young man in the revolution; he himself estimated (in the year 1899) that he had lived more than a century, and other old men of the village who were well past their threescore years and ten reckoned him senior to themselves by a full generation; moreover his own reminiscences of the war argued a personal share in the fighting. But whether the savage episode which he described was really a prelude to that most savage war, or some traditional event of the island's history post-dated and inserted in the most glorious epoch of modern Greek history, is a question which cannot be finally determined. Chronology to a peasant who does not know the year of his own birth is naturally a matter of some indifference, and excitability of imagination coupled with the habit, or rather the instinct, of self-glorification in the Greek

[1] This phrase as noted down by me from memory along with the rest of the story immediately after my interview is, I believe, verbally exact. The old man's words were *ἐσκεφτήκαμε λοιπὸν κι' ἀποφασίσαμε νὰ στείλουμε ἄνθρωπο 'στὸν "Αγι' Νικόλα, γιὰ νά τον παρακαλέσῃ νὰ ἐπιτυχαίνουνε τὰ καράβι̱α μας στὸν πόλεμο.*

character, would account for an unconscious and not intentionally dishonest transference of the stirring events of earlier days to a date at which their narrator could have personally participated in them; there is no one so easily deceived by a Greek as himself, and no one half so honestly. Yet on the whole I incline to believe the story.

Fortunately the chronological exactitude and detailed precision of the story do not much matter. Accurate or inaccurate in itself it contains a clear expression of the view held by the old peasant of the purpose of human sacrifice. 'We thought things over and decided to send a man to St Nicolas to ask him that our ships might prosper in the war.' This is our text, and its very terseness and directness of expression prove how familiar and native to the speaker's mind was this aspect of sacrifice. The human victim was simply and solely a messenger. St Nicolas, to whom he was sent, has supplanted Poseidon, as has been remarked above[1], in the government of the sea and the patronage of sailors; but how he came to be associated with the hall which was deemed a right place for the sacrifice, unless perhaps he had succeeded to the possession of the site of some temple of Poseidon, I cannot say. It is of little avail to press for further elucidation of a peasant's story. I would gladly have learnt more about the hall now wholly buried but then partially at least visible above ground, into which none the less a descent by steps is mentioned; I would gladly have learnt more about the appearance of God with a bright torch in his hand, and what was the significance to the peasant's mind of the appearance of God himself[2] (ὁ θεός) instead of St Nicolas to whom the messenger was sent. These uncertainties and obscurities must remain. The only additional fact which I elicited was that the man taken and sent to St Nicolas was in Greek parlance a 'Christian,' that is to say neither a Turk nor a member of the Roman Church which has long held a footing in the island. There was therefore no admixture of either racial or religious hatred in the feelings which prompted, as it is alleged, this human sacrifice.

If then the story be accepted, the motive assigned must be

[1] See above, p. 55.

[2] The term ὁ θεός could not have been intended to apply to St Nicolas; although the saints are practically treated as gods, they are not so spoken of. See above, pp. 42 ff.

accepted with it; but if the story be discredited, the motive assigned has still a value. For even if the old man had deliberately invented the tale and claimed complicity in so ghastly a deed, whence could he have obtained that conception of human sacrifice which furnished the motive of the action? It is inconceivable that he should have evolved the idea from personal meditations on the subject of sacrifice. It is equally inconceivable that he could have obtained it from any literary source; for he could not read, and the only book of which he could have had any knowledge would have been the Bible, to which this view of sacrifice is unknown. The only source from which he could have received the idea is native and oral tradition.

So distinct an expression of the idea is naturally rare, because human sacrifice is not an every-day topic of conversation among peasantry; but such a theory of sacrifice is perfectly harmonious with that chord of Greek religion of which several notes have already been struck. To obey dreams, to enquire of oracles, to observe birds, to hear omens in chance words, to read divine messages in the flesh of sacrificial victims, to make presents to the powers above for the purpose of securing blessings or averting wrath—these are the ways of a people from whose mind the primitive belief in close contact and converse with their gods has not been expelled by the invasion of education; whose religion has not paid the price of ennobling its conceptions and elevating its ideals by making the worshipper feel too acutely his debasement and his distance from the godhead; whose instinctive judgement divides the domain of faith from the domain of reason, and accepts poetical beauty rather than logical probability as the evidence of things unseen. True indeed it is that of all the practices by which this people's belief in intercourse with their gods is attested none is so remarkable as acquiescence or complicity in murder prompted solely by the belief that the victim by passing the gates of death can carry a message in person to one in whose power the future lies. But all that is painful and gruesome in such a deed only accentuates the more the unflinching faith of a people who, not in blind devotion to custom nor in fear of a prophet's command, but intelligently and of piety prepense, could sacrifice a compatriot and co-religionist to ensure the safe carriage of their most urgent prayers.

If tragedy consists in the conflict of deep emotions, and religion in obeying the divine rather than the human, few deeds have been more tragic, none more religious than this. In that scene at Aulis when the warrior-king gave up his child at the prophet's bidding to stay the wrath of Artemis against his host, the tragedy was indeed intensified by the strength of the human tie between the sacrificer and the victim; but blind and awe-struck submission to a prophet's decree is less grandly religious than clear-sighted recognition and courageous application of the belief that the dead pass immediately into the very presence of the gods. Here are the two given conditions: first, the urgency of the present or the peril of the future requires that a request for help be safely conveyed at all costs to that god or saint in whose province the control of the danger lies; secondly, the safest way of sending a message to that god or saint is by the mouth of a human messenger whose road is over the pass of death. There is only one solution of that problem. And if it is true that only some eighty years ago the problem was solved at so cruel a cost, then the faith of this people in their communion with those on whose knees the future lies is more intense, more vital, more courageous than that of more Western nations whose religion has long been subordinated or at least allied to morality, and whose acts of worship are all well-regulated and eminently decorous.

Human sacrifice is known to have been practised in ancient Greece and the custom probably continued well into the Christian era. What was the motive which prompted the continuance of so cruel a rite? Was it the same as that which the old peasant of Santorini assigned for the performance of a like act in his own experience—that conception of the victim as a messenger with which he can have been familiar only from native and oral tradition? Assuredly some strong religious motive must have compelled the ancients to a rite which in the absence of such motive would have been an indelible stigma upon their civilisation, refuting all their claims to emancipation of thought and freedom of intellect, and branding them the very bond-slaves of grossest superstition. Even though they lived on the marches of the East where human life is of small account, the horror of the rite is in too vivid a contrast with Hellenic enlightenment for us to see in it a mere callous retention of an unmeaning and savage custom;

but that horror is at least mitigated if underlying the practice there was some deep religious motive, if a genuine faith in the possibility of direct intercourse with heaven exalted above the sacredness of human life the sacred privilege of sending a messenger to present the whole people's petition before their god.

But while it is easy to perceive that such a motive is in harmony with that belief in the possibility of the communion of man with God which is so pronounced a feature in the religion of the ancient Greeks no less than in that of their descendants, it is a far harder task actually to prove that this motive was the one acknowledged justification for human sacrifice. Ancient literature is extremely reticent on the whole subject; the very fact of the existence of the rite is known chiefly from late writers, Plutarch[1], Porphyry[2], and Tzetzes[3]; and anything like a discussion of the motives which underlay it is nowhere to be found. This reticence however was prompted, we may suppose, simply and solely by the patent barbarity of the act; it in no way impugns the latent beauty of the motive. Rather the persistence in a rite which did violence to men's humaner feelings and moral sense proves the strength of the appeal which the motive for it must have addressed to their religious convictions. There was no place for shame in the belief that death was the road by which alone a human messenger could gain immediate access to the gods; but if a messenger were required to go at regular intervals, the regular occurrence of deaths required murder. This, I think, was the cause of shame and reticence.

Now if this very simple analysis of the feelings which almost barred the discussion or even mention of human sacrifice by ancient authors is correct, we should expect to find that, where death occurred naturally and not by human intervention, the conception of the dying or the dead as messengers to the unseen world would find ready and unembarrassed expression. And especially is this to be expected among the Greeks with whom grief has never imposed a check upon garrulity, but rather the loudness of the lamentation has always been the test of the poignancy of the sorrow. It is therefore in funeral-dirges and such-like that we must look for the expression of this idea.

[1] Plutarch, *Pelop.* 21 (p. 229).
[2] Porph. *de Abstin.* 27 and 54.
[3] Tzetz. *Hist.* XXIII. 726 ff.

An organised ceremony of lamentation is at the present day an essential part of every Greek funeral, and many dirges sung on such occasions have been collected and published. In these the conception of the departed as a messenger, or even as a carrier of goods, abounds[1]. A Laconian dirge runs thus: 'A prudent lady, a virtuous wife, willed and resolved to go down to Hades. "Whoso has words" (she cried) "let him say them, and messages, let him send them; whoso has a son there unarmed, let him send his arms; whoso has son there a scribe, let him send his papers; whoso has daughter undowered, let him send her dowry; whoso has a little child, let him send his swaddling clothes."'[2]

The same thought inspires a dirge in Passow's collection[3], in which the thoughts of a dead man, round whose body the women are sitting and weeping, are thus expressed: 'Why stand ye round about me, all ye sorrowing women? Have I come forth from Hades, forth from the world below? Nay, now am I making ready, now am I at the point to go. Whoso hath word, let him speak it, and message, let him tell it; whoso hath long complaint, let him write and send it.' And again in another funeral-song a dead man is described as a 'trusty courier bound for the world below[4].'

This sentiment, so frequently and so clearly expressed in the modern dirges, is of ancient descent. Polyxena, about to be sacrificed at Achilles' tomb, is made by Euripides to address to her mother the question, 'What am I to say from thee to Hector or to thy aged husband?', and Hecuba answers, 'My message is that I am of all women most miserable[5].' And it is the same genuinely Hellenic thought which Vergil attributes to Neoptolemus when he answers Priam's taunts of degeneracy with the words, 'These tidings then thou shalt carry, and shalt go as messenger to my sire, the son of Peleus; forget not to tell him of my sorry deeds and that Neoptolemus is no true son. Now die[6].'

And it is not only in the poetry of ancient and modern Greece but also in the actual customs of the people that this idea has found

[1] Cf. Πολίτης, Μελέτη, II. p. 341.
[2] Ραζέλης, Μυρολόγια, p. 16. Πολίτης, Μελέτη, II. 343.
[3] *Popul. Carm.* no. 373.
[4] Ραζέλης, Μυρολόγια, p. 36. Cf. Πολίτης, Μελέτη, II. p. 342. The line runs *μαντατοφόρος φρόνιμος 'πού πάει 'στὸν κάτω κόσμο.*
[5] Eur. *Hec.* 422–3. [6] Verg. *Aen.* II. 547 sqq.

expression. At the present day funerals are constantly treated by the peasants as real opportunities of communicating with their dead friends and relatives. Whether the custom is ever carried out exactly as it once was by the Galatae, who used to write letters to the departed and to lay them on the pyre of each new courier to the lower world[1], I cannot definitely say; but a proverbial expression used of a person dangerously ill, *μαζεύει γράμματα γιὰ τοὺς πεθαμμένους*, 'he is collecting letters for the dead,' lends colour to the supposition that either now or in earlier days this form of the custom is or has been in vogue. But in general now certainly the messages are not written but verbal. It is a common custom, noticed by many writers on Greek folklore[2], for the women who assist in the ceremonial lamentation which precedes the interment to insert in the dirges, which they each in turn contribute, messages which they require the newly-dead to deliver to some departed person whom they name, or, according to a slightly different usage, to whisper such messages secretly in the ear of the dead either immediately before the body is borne away to the church[3], or, where women are allowed to attend the actual interment, at the moment of 'the last kiss' (*ὁ τελευταῖος ἀσπασμός*), which forms an essential and very painful part of the Eastern rite.

The antiquity of this custom appears to me to be as certain as anything which is not explicitly stated in ancient literature can be. For in every detail of ancient funeral usage known to us there is so complete a coincidence with modern usage that it would be absurd not to supplement records of the past by observation of the present. Actually to establish that identity in every particular is beyond the scope of the present chapter and must be reserved until later; but my assertion may be justified here by reference to three points in Solon's legislation on the subject of funerals. That legislation was directed against three practices to which mourners were addicted in this ceremonial lamentation of which I have been speaking—laceration of the cheeks and breast, the use of set and premeditated dirges, and lamentation

[1] Diodor. Sic. v. 28.

[2] e.g. Fauriel, *Chants de la Grèce Moderne*, *Discours Prélimin.* p. 39. Rennell Rodd, *Customs and Lore of Mod. Greece*, p. 129.

[3] Dora d'Istria, *Les Femmes en Orient*, Bk III. Letter 2.

for any other than him whose funeral was in progress[1]—customs which all still flourish.

The laceration is quite a common feature of such occasions. Indeed in some districts the women nearest of kin to the deceased are almost thought to fail in their duty to him if they do not work themselves up into an hysterical mood and testify to the wildness of their grief by tearing out their hair and scratching their cheeks till the blood flows. Such a display of agony, it must be remembered, comes easy to the Greeks: for their temperament is such that, even when the fact of the bereavement has moved them little, the *rôle* of the bereaved excites them to the most dramatic excesses. Men rarely if ever now take part in this scene, and are certainly not guilty of such transports; for their usual method of mourning is to let their hair grow instead of tearing it out, and to avoid laceration by forswearing the razor.

Again, the use of set dirges, composed or adapted beforehand to suit the estate and circumstances of the deceased, is almost universal; and so essential to the funeral-rite is the formal lamentation that there are actually women whose profession it is to intone dirges and who are hired for the occasion. These professional mourners (μυρολογήτριαις or μυρολογίστριαις) take their seats round the corpse in order of seniority and assist the wife, mother, sisters, cousins, and aunts, who also take their seats according to degree of kinship (the head of the bier being of course the place of honour), to keep up an incessant flow of lamentation. The scene differs in no detail, save that the hired mourners now are always women, from that which was enacted round the body of Hector. There too 'they set singers to lead the lamentation,' and of the women present it was Andromache, the wife, who began the wailing, Hecuba, the mother, who followed next, and Helen whose voice was heard third and last[2]. The singers who led the lamentation were probably then as now hired, for Plato speaks of paid minstrels at funerals using a particular style of music known as Carian[3]—a custom suggestive of antiquity; and in all probability the singing of set dirges, which Solon tried to suppress, was the recognised business of professional

[1] Plutarch, *Vita Solon.* 20.
[2] Hom. *Il.* xxiv. 719—775.
[3] Plato, *Leg.* vii. p. 801.

and paid mourners; for dirges premeditated by the relatives would have been less objectionable, one may suppose, than their hysterical improvisations. What success his legislation obtained in Athens cannot now be ascertained; but the custom was undoubtedly universal in Greece, and with the exception of the Ionian islands, where the Venetians imitated Solon in sternly repressing what they regarded as a scandal and a grave offence against public decency[1], all parts of Greece still to some extent retain it; and it is likely long to survive for the simple reason that lamentation has always been held by the Greeks to be as essential to the repose of the dead as burial. There is more than hazard in the repeated collocation of ἄκλαυτος, ἄταφος, 'unwept, unburied,' in the tragedians[2]; there is the religious idea that the dead need a twofold rite, both mourning and interment.

The third point in the funeral customs to which Solon demurred was that mourners attending the ceremony of lamentation misused the occasion by wailing again for their own dead and neglecting him whose death had brought them together. This practice was known to the Homeric age; for while Briseïs 'tore with her hands her breast and smooth neck and fair face' and with shrill wailing and tears made lament over Patroclus, 'the women joined their groans to hers, for Patroclus in form, but each really for their own losses[3].' There is no intention of satire here; it is simply a naïve touch in the picture of a familiar and pathetic scene. Patroclus' death furnished the excuse and the occasion for tears, but most of those tears—pent up till they might flow freely and without shame—were shed for nearer sorrows, dearer losses. To-day the manner is the same. In some districts, as in Chios[4], a woman's desire to lament again over her own dead is recognised as so legitimate that etiquette merely prescribes that she first must make mention of the present dead and afterwards she is free to mourn for whom she will; and indeed throughout Greece the opportunity for rehearsing former sorrows is rarely neglected.

[1] An edict of the year 1662 preserved in the record-office (ἀρχαιοφυλακεῖον) of Zante was shown and interpreted to me by Mons. Λεωνίδας Χ. Ζώης, whose courtesy I wish here to acknowledge. The record-office contains much valuable material for the study of the period of Venetian supremacy in the Heptanesos.

[2] Soph. *Antig.* 29; Eur. *Hec.* 30; cf. also Soph. *Antig.* 203–4 τάφῳ μήτε κτερίζειν, μήτε κωκῦσαί τινα, and *Philoct.* 360.

[3] Hom. *Il.* XIX. 301–2.

[4] Κωνστ. Καιελλάκης, Χιακὰ 'Ανάλεκτα, pp. 335–6.

Now when in these details that have been enumerated (as well as in many others such as the washing, arraying, and crowning of the dead body, the antiquity of which will be treated in another chapter[1]) that portion of ancient usage which is known from literary sources is found surviving, point for point identical, as a portion of modern usage, then the defect of ancient literary sources is best and most reasonably supplemented from present observations. Thus we know from the *Iliad* that the women of the Homeric age used Patroclus' funeral as an occasion for renewing their wailing over their own losses; we know too from Plutarch that in Solon's age the same practice had attained such excessive proportions that legislation intervened to check it; the only detail which we are not told is whether the mourners in commemorating thus their own dead friends were wont to entrust messages for them to him about whose bier they were assembled. But when the ancient picture of funeral-usage corresponds thus in every distinguishable trait with the living scenes of to-day, clearly the right way of restoring that which is obscured or obliterated in the picture is to go and to see still enacted in all its traditional fulness that very scene which the remnants of ancient literature imperfectly pourtray. And by going and seeing we learn this—that one strongly marked characteristic of funeral-rites is the belief, both expressed in words and evidenced in acts, that he whose death has brought the mourners together is a messenger who can and will carry tidings to those who have preceded him to the world below. Then on looking back we may feel confident that that aspect of death, which prompted Polyxena to ask what message she should bear from Hecuba to Hector and to Priam, was no mere poetic conceit imagined by Euripides, but a common feature of the popular religion. The belief that the passing spirit is a sure and unerring messenger to another world has ever been the property of the Hellenic people.

Since then this belief existed in ancient times and the practice of human sacrifice also existed, it remains to enquire whether the two were correlated as cause and effect, as in my story from Santorini. In this enquiry the reticence of ancient literature on the subject precludes, as I have pointed out, actual certainty; but a passage from Herodotus offers a clue which is worth following up.

[1] See below, pp. 555 ff.

In speaking of the Getae, a Thracian people, he remarks that they believe in their own immortality. 'They hold that they themselves do not die, but the departed go to dwell with a god named Zalmoxis....And every four years they choose one of their own number by lot and despatch him as messenger to Zalmoxis, enjoining upon him the delivery of their various requests. The manner of sending him is this. Some of them are set to hold up three spears, while others take their emissary by his arms and by his legs and swinging him up into the air let him fall upon the spear-points. If he be pierced by them mortally, they consider that their god is favourable to them; but if death do not result, they lay the blame on the messenger himself and give him a bad name; but having censured him they despatch another man instead. Their injunctions are given to the messenger before he is killed[1].'

Now no one can fail to notice that Herodotus' own interest in this custom centres not in the idea which prompted it but in the manner of carrying it out. His account of it reads as if he knew his Greek readers to be familiar enough with the conception of human sacrifice as a means of sending a messenger to some god; but he seems to be contrasting the method adopted with some rite of which they were cognisant. Tacit comparisons of foreign customs with those of Greece occur all through Herodotus' work. The points which he here seems to emphasize are, first, that the messenger of the Getae was one of themselves, not a prisoner of war or a slave; secondly, that impaling was the ritual mode of death—a mode which the Greeks held in abhorrence and would never have employed; and, thirdly, that the messages were committed to the victim's charge before and not after death. The inference therefore is that Herodotus and the Greeks for whom he was writing were accustomed to some rite which was inspired by the same motive but was differently executed, the messenger being other than a citizen, the method of sacrifice less barbarous to their minds than impaling, and the messages being whispered, as at funerals, in the dead victim's ear; for of course, if the newly-dead could carry tidings to men in the other world, they could equally well carry petitions to gods.

[1] Herodot. IV. 94.

Moreover my contention that Herodotus had in mind some Greek rite, with which he was contrasting that of the Getae, is borne out by the passage immediately following, in which the idea of comparison comes to the surface. This Zalmoxis, he continues, according to the Greeks of the Hellespont and the Euxine, was in origin not a god but a man. He served for a time as a slave to Pythagoras in Samos, but having gained his liberty and considerable wealth returned to Thrace and tried to reclaim his countrymen from savagery and ignorance. The ways of life and the doctrines which he inculcated were such as he had derived from intercourse with Greeks and above all with Pythagoras, whose teachings concerning immortality and a future life in a happier land he both preached and (by the trick of hiding himself for three years in a subterranean chamber and then re-appearing to those who had believed him dead) illustrated in his own person. This story is neither accepted nor rejected by Herodotus, but, estimating Zalmoxis to have been of much earlier date than Pythagoras, he inclines slightly to the view that Zalmoxis was really a native god of the Getae.

If we may assume this view to be correct, what significance is to be attached to the story of Zalmoxis' relations with Pythagoras? Evidently it is one of those fictions by which the ancient Greeks loved to bring the great figures of history into contact and personal acquaintance. Pythagoras and Zalmoxis were two names with which was associated the doctrine of immortality; some story therefore of their meeting was desirable. And since Pythagoras was Greek, Zalmoxis barbarian, the legend that the slave Zalmoxis was instructed by his master Pythagoras was more flattering to Hellenic pride than the idea that Pythagoras in his travels should have borrowed so important a doctrine from a foreign religion; and if chronology did not concur—well, imagination always had precedence of accuracy. To the Greeks who invented the tale fitness was of more account than fact; and for us who dismiss the actual story as mere fiction their sense of its fitness remains instructive. It shows that the Greeks recognised the existence of specially close relations between the religion of the Getae and their own—relations attested probably not only by their common acceptance of the doctrine of immortality, for that was the property of other peoples too, but also by some resemblance

between the rites of the Getae which were based upon that doctrine and similar rites practised, as Herodotus hints, by themselves.

Then again if the motive which we have found operating in Herodotus' time among the Getae and operating also less than a century ago among the peasants of Santorini was not the motive which prompted the ancient Greeks to human sacrifice, how can we account for the long perpetuation of the practice? It is practically certain that it was tolerated in Athens during the period of her ascendency and highest enlightenment[1]; but the repugnance which it inspired is proved by the reticence which almost concealed the fact from posterity. It was practised apparently in honour of Lycaean Zeus in the time of Pausanias[2]; but the horror of it closed his lips concerning this 'secret sacrifice.' Suppose then that the motive for this sacrifice had been the sating of a wolf-like god—for so Pausanias seems to have understood the epithet Λυκαῖος[3]—with human flesh; could such a rite have continued in any part of Greece for some six centuries after it had become repugnant at least in Athens? Was the supposed motive so sublime that it was held to hallow or even to mitigate the barbarity of the act? Or did the custom live on without motive when an anthropomorphic Zeus had superseded the old wolf-like deity? Custom, it is true, often outlives its parent belief; but custom itself is not invulnerable nor deathless if it has to battle against sentiments irreconcilably opposed to that original belief. If the purpose of propitiating a wolf-god with human flesh was rendered null and void by the modifications which the conception of Lycaean Zeus had undergone, how could the crude and savage rite have still flourished in the uncongenial soil of an humaner civilisation—unless of course some new stream of religious thought, instead of the original motive, had watered and revived it? The very fact that so hideous a custom was so long maintained in civilised Greece argues that, whatever the original motive of it may have been, only some strong religious belief in the necessity of it could have saved it from extinction in the historical age. Surely it was some convincing plea of justification, and not mere

[1] For the evidence see Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 96 ff.

[2] Cf. Paus. VIII. 38. 7 and Porphyr. *de abstinentia*, II. 27.

[3] Paus. VIII. 2. 6 and VIII. 38. 7 and Frazer's note *ad loc.*

acquiescence in the inveteracy of custom, which caused Pausanias, though he could not bring himself to describe or to discuss the horrid sacrifice, yet to conclude his brief allusion to it with the words, 'as it was in the beginning and is now, so let it be[1].'

My reasons then for suggesting that one motive which led to human sacrifice in ancient Greece was the belief that the victim could carry a petition in person to the gods are threefold. First, that motive was recognised as sufficient by a peasant of Santorini, who can only have inherited the idea, just as all the ideas of divination have been inherited, from the ancient world. Secondly, Herodotus appears to contrast the method of such sacrifice among the Getae with the method of some similar rite familiar to his audience and to imply that the motive in each case was the same. Thirdly, without an adequate motive—and it is hard to see what other motive could have been adequate in the case which I have taken—it is almost inconceivable that human sacrifice should have continued, in spite of the repugnance which it certainly excited, for so long a time. For these reasons I submit that the known belief of the ancients that the dead could serve as messengers to the other world and their known custom of making human sacrifice were correlated in the minds of thinking men in the more civilised ages as cause and effect.

The reservation, 'in the minds of thinking men in the more civilised ages,' is necessary; for I am at a loss how to determine whether the belief in question was the original motive of the custom or a later justification of the custom when its original motive had been forgotten. Either the belief was coeval with the custom, and both were inherited together from ancestors belonging to that 'lower barbaric stage' of culture in which 'men do not stop short at the persuasion that death releases the soul to a free and active existence, but they quite logically proceed to assist nature by slaying men in order to liberate their souls for ghostly uses[2]'; or on the other hand the custom of human sacrifice originated in some other motive (such as satisfying the appetite of a beast-like god) and remaining itself unchanged, while the conception of the god was gradually humanised until his beast-form and therewith the original purpose of the sacrifice were lost to

[1] Paus. VIII. 38. 7.
[2] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I. p. 458.

memory, embarrassed a more enlightened and humaner age until a new justification for it was found in the messenger-functions of the dead.

In support of the former supposition it may be mentioned that tribes far more barbarous than the Getae (who may have benefited from Greek civilisation) have evolved the particular ghostly use of dead men's souls which we are considering. In Dahome, according to Captain Burton, not only are a large number of wives, eunuchs, singers, drummers, and soldiers slaughtered at the king's funeral, that they may wait on him in another world, but 'whatever action, however trivial, is performed by the (new) king, it must dutifully be reported to his sire in the shadowy realm. A victim, almost always a war-captive, is chosen; the message is delivered to him, an intoxicating draught of rum follows it, and he is dispatched to Hades in the best of humours[1].' There is therefore no objection to the supposition that the Hellenic people too from the days of prehistoric savagery were constantly actuated by this motive.

On the other hand it is equally admissible to think that some cruder motive first led the population of Greece to adopt the custom of human sacrifice, and that it was only comparatively late in their history, in an age when men's humaner instincts were offended by the atrocity of the rite and religious speculation on the subject of the soul's immortality was rife, that the old custom was invested with a new meaning. Herodotus clearly recognised the connexion between the rite of the Getae and the doctrine of immortality which was bound up with the names of Zalmoxis and Pythagoras; and it is possible that in Greece too the later justification of human sacrifice was founded on the same doctrine. It would have been an irony of fate truly if a doctrine not indeed founded, I think, but largely expounded by Pythagoras, who forbade his followers to kill even animals for the purposes of food, should have been so construed as to furnish a plea for the immolation of men; but it is quite clear that a belief in the activity of the soul after death, superimposed upon the desire for close communion between men and gods, might have had that issue.

But, as I have said, I see no means of deciding at what date the correlation of the conception of the dead as messengers and

[1] Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, I. p. 462.

the custom of human sacrifice as cause and effect first entered men's minds; but that in the historical age that correlation was acknowledged seems to me highly probable. Such a view would certainly have militated against the substitution of animal for human victims; for only a man would have been felt to be capable of understanding the message and of delivering it to the god to whom he was sent. This perhaps is the reason why the use of a surrogate animal—though early introduced, as one version of the story of Iphigenia proves—never met with universal acceptance, and why also at the present day there remains a vague but real feeling that for the proper laying of foundations a human victim is preferable to beast or bird[1].

To single out particular instances of ancient sacrifice in which this motive may have operated is, owing to the general absence of data concerning the ritual, well-nigh impossible. The sacrifice to Lycaean Zeus was performed upon an altar before which, according to Pausanias[2], there stood two columns and upon them two gilded eagles; and we may surmise that as the eagles represented to his mind the messengers sent by Zeus to men, so did the human victim represent the messenger of men to Zeus. But this can be only a conjecture, for Pausanias' silence admits of no more.

Of the ceremony connected with the *pharmakos*, or human scape-goat, at Athens and elsewhere somewhat more is known. Certain persons ungainly in appearance and debased in character were maintained at the public expense, in order that, if any calamity such as a pestilence should befall the city, they might be sacrificed to purify the city from pollution. These persons were called *φαρμακοί*, 'scape-goats,' or *καθάρματα*, 'purifications[3].' 'If calamity overtook a city through divine wrath, whether it were famine or pestilence or any other bane,' a *pharmakos* was led out to an appointed place for sacrifice. Cheese, barley-cake, and dried figs were given to him. He was smitten seven times on the privy parts with squills and wild figs and other wild plants; and finally he was burnt with fire upon fuel collected from wild trees, and the ashes were scattered to the winds and the sea[4]. At Athens, it appears, this rite was performed, not under the stress of oc-

[1] See above, p. 264.
[2] Paus. VIII. 38. 7.
[3] Schol. ad Ar. *Eq.* 1136 in explanation of the word *δημόσιοι*.
[4] Tzetzes, *Hist.* XXIII. 726 ff. quoting Hipponax' authority on most points.

casional calamity, but annually as part of the *Thargelia*, and was therefore associated with Apollo[1].

All this evidence, with corroboration from other sources than those to which I have referred, has recently been set forth by Miss Harrison, who certainly has made out a strong case for the view which she thus summarises: 'The leading out of the *pharmakos* is then a purely magical ceremony based on ignorance and fear; it is not a human sacrifice to Apollo or to any other divinity or even ghost, it is a ceremony of physical expulsion[2].' In other words, the *pharmakos* was treated as an incarnation of the polluting influence from which the city was suffering; and his expulsion (which only incidentally involved his death) was the means of purification.

But there are certain points in the practice which incline me to put forward another view of the *pharmakos*. His mission undoubtedly was to purify the city; but the question to my mind is whether he was expelled as a personification of the pollution or was led out and despatched to the other world as a messenger on the city's behalf to petition Apollo or some other deity for purification from the defilement.

It might, I think, have been this Greek rite which was present to Herodotus' mind when he was describing human sacrifice among the Getae. He was apparently familiar, we saw, with the conception of the human victim as a messenger; and the contrasts in method which seem to have struck him most would certainly have been provided by the ceremony of the *pharmakos*. The Getae chose the victim by lot from among themselves; the Athenians apparently selected some deformed or criminal slave—one of the very scum of the population. The Getae impaled their messenger upon the spears of warriors; the Athenians treated the *pharmakos* as a burnt-sacrifice. The Getae entrusted their messages to the victim before he was slain; did the Athenians perchance whisper their petitions for purification in the ear of the dead *pharmakos* as he lay on the pyre? Was he the messenger whose treatment Herodotus had in mind?

There are certain points in the ritual itself which make for that view. The *pharmakos* was maintained for a time at the public

[1] Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 95 f.
[2] *op. cit.* p. 108.

cost. Why so? A kindred custom of Marseilles in ancient times supplies the answer. 'Whenever the inhabitants of Marseilles suffer from a pestilence, one of the poorer class offers himself to be kept at the public expense and fed on specially pure foods. After this has been done he is decorated with sacred boughs and clad in holy garments, and led about through the whole city to the accompaniment of curses, in order that upon him may fall all the ills of the whole city, and thus he is cast headlong down[1].' The *pharmakos* was therefore publicly maintained in order that he might be purified by diet. Again, we know, the *pharmakos* was provided before the sacrifice with cheese, barley-cake, and dried figs—pure food, it would seem, with which to sustain himself on his journey to the other world. Again, he was smitten seven times on the privy parts with squills and branches of wild fig and other wild plants. Why with squill and wild fig? Because plants of this kind were purgative, as Miss Harrison[2] very clearly points out. Among other evidences of the existence of this idea, Lucian[3] makes Menippus relate how before he was allowed to consult the oracle of the dead he was "purged and wiped clean and consecrated with squill and torches." And why on the privy parts? Because sexual purity was required. When Creon was bidden to sacrifice a son for the salvation of his city in a time of calamity such as commonly called for the sacrifice of a *pharmakos,* Haemon was refused because of his marriage[4], and Menoeceus was the only pure victim. And why beaten at all? Because again, as Miss Harrison shows[5], the act of beating was expulsive of evil and pollution. So then the chief part of the ritual was devoted to purifying the *pharmakos* himself.

But if the *pharmakos* was thus himself made pure, how could his expulsion purify the city? How could a man deliberately cleansed by every religious or magical device serve as the embodiment of that pollution of which the city sought to be rid? Miss Harrison[6] seeks to explain this difficulty on the grounds of that combination of the notions 'sacred' and 'accursed,' 'pure' and 'impure,' which the savage describes in the word 'taboo.' But the notion of 'taboo,' though complex, is not illogical; anything

[1] Serv. ad Verg. *Aen.* III. 75 as translated by Miss Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 108.
[2] *op. cit.* p. 100. [3] Luc. *Nek.* 7.
[4] Eur. *Phoen.* 944. [5] *op. cit.* p. 100. [6] *op. cit.* p. 108.

supernatural, which when properly used or respected is holy, is logically enough believed to be fraught with a curse for those who misuse or disregard it. But deliberately to purify that which is to be the embodiment of defilement is not the outcome of a complex but logical primitive notion; it is simply illogical.

The view of the rite then which I propose is briefly this. The *pharmakos* was originally a messenger, representative of a whole people, carrying to some god their petition for deliverance from any great calamity; and, that he might be fitted to enter the presence of the god, he was purified, like Menippus before he was allowed to approach even an oracle, by every known means. But the office of *pharmakos* did not always remain a post of honour. It was naturally not coveted by those who found any pleasure in life; and gradually the duty devolved upon the lowest of the low. Instead of an Iphigenia or a Menoeceus the people's chosen representative was some criminal or slave, and the personality of the messenger overshadowed the character of his office. The original purport of the rite was forgotten. Instead of being honoured as the people's ambassador, specially purified for his mission of intercession with the gods, he was deemed an outcast by whose removal the people could rid themselves of pollution. Thus the religious rite lost its true motive and degenerated into a magical ceremony of riddance.

That this debased idea was the vulgar interpretation of the rite in historical Athens is absolutely proved by a passage from Lysias' speech against Andocides: 'We needs must hold that in avenging ourselves and ridding ourselves of Andocides we purify the city and perform apotropaic ceremonies and solemnly expel a *pharmakos* and rid ourselves of a criminal; for of this sort the fellow is[1].' But the whole ritual forms a protest against that idea. Its keynote was the sanctification, not the degradation, of the *pharmakos.* In Marseilles indeed the people's change of attitude towards the messenger whom they so scrupulously purified had gone so far that imprecations upon him were substituted for the prayers which he should have been bidden to carry; but in Athens and in Ionia the ritual itself, so far as we know, contained no suggestion of contempt or hatred of the victim. It was only

[1] Lysias, *c. Andoc.* 108. 4 as translated by Miss Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 97.

the appearance and the character of those who were selected as *pharmakoi* which made of the word a term of vulgar abuse such as we find it to be in Aristophanes[1]; for the scattering of the victim's ashes to the winds and waves must not be interpreted as an act denoting any abhorrence of the dead man. Its significance is rather this. Religious motives had involved an act of bloodshed, and the people who had performed it as a religious duty were, like Orestes, none the less guilty of blood. In any case of blood-guilt it was held prudent for the guilty party to take precautions against his victim's vengeance; and one means to this end was, as we shall see later, to burn the body and scatter its ashes. In the modern story from Santorini there is a precaution mentioned which has precisely the same object; the victim's hands, as well as his head, were cut off. This, as I shall show later, is a survival of the old μασχαλισμός or mutilation of murdered men, by which they were rendered innocuous, if they should return from the grave, and incapable of vengeance upon their murderers. There is then, I repeat, nothing in the ritual itself which suggests any contempt or hatred of the victim, as there assuredly would have been if from the first he had been the incarnation of the city's defilement.

Possibly then the *pharmakos* was originally a messenger from men to gods, sent in any time of great calamity and peril; possibly too this significance of the rite had not in Herodotus' time been wholly supplanted by the lower view to which Lysias gave utterance. Lysias was addressing a jury and abusing an opponent; a vulgar and base presentment of the *pharmakos* suited the occasion. But sober and reflective men may still have read in the ritual its early meaning and have recognised in the *pharmakos*, for all his sorry appearance, the purified representative of a people sent by them to lay their prayers before some god.

This, I am aware, is a suggestion and no more. To prove the existence of this motive underlying any given case of human sacrifice in ancient times is, owing to the meagre character of the data, impossible. But since at any rate the conception of the dead as messengers was known to the ancients—for that much, I think, I have proved—the suggestion deserves consideration. If it be right, it shows that even the most ugly and repulsive

[1] *Ran.* 734, *Equ.* 1405 and fragm. 532 (from Miss Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 97).

ceremonies of Greek worship need not be regarded as damning refutation of the beauty of Greek religion. Though the act of human sacrifice is horrible, the motive for it may have been sublime. Where else in the civilised world is the faith which whispers messages in a dead ear? Who shall cast the first stone at those who in this faith dared to speed their messenger upon the road of death? Surely such a deed is the crowning act of a faith which by dreams and oracles, by auspices and sacrificial omens, has ever sought after communion with the gods.

Yet no, that faith aspired even higher; another chapter will treat of a sacrament which foreshadowed not merely the colloquy of men with gods as of servants with masters, but a closer communion between them, the communion of love; for, as Plato says in the text which heads this chapter, 'all sacrifices and all the arts of divination, wherein consists the mutual communion of gods and men, are for nought else but the guarding and tending of Love'

# CHAPTER IV.

## THE RELATION OF SOUL AND BODY.

### § 1. The Modern Greek Vampire.

The division of the human entity into the two parts which we call soul and body has been so universally recognised even among the most primitive of mankind that the idea of it must have been first suggested by the observation of some universal phenomenon—most probably the phenomenon of unconsciousness whether in sleep, in fainting, in trance, or in death. If it had been man's lot to pass in this world a life of activity unbroken by sleep or exhaustion, and thereafter to be translated like Enoch or Ganymede to another world, so that the spectacle of a body lying inert and senseless could never have been forced upon men's sight, the first impulse to speculation concerning that impalpable something, the loss of which severs men from converse with the waking, active world, might never have been given, and the duality of human nature might never have been conceived. But death above all overtaking each in turn has forced in turn the mourners for each to muse on the future condition of these two elements which, united, make a man, and, disjoined, leave but a corpse. Does neither or does one or do both of them continue? And, continuing, what degree of intelligence and of power has either or have both? Are they for ever separated, or will they be re-united elsewhere? Such are the questions that must have vexed, as they still vex, the minds of many when their eyes were confronted by the spectacle of death.

For some indeed a means of answering or of quieting such searchings of heart has been found in the acceptance of religious dogma. But ancient Greek religion, the faith or superstition in which the Hellenic people, defiant alike of destructive and of con-

structive philosophy, lived and moved and had their being, was not dogmatic; the very priests were guardians and exponents of ceremonies rather than preachers of doctrine; there was no organised hierarchy committed to one set creed and prepared to assert the divine revelation of a single formulated answer to these questions. The sum total of orthodoxy amounted to little more than a belief in gods; and each man was free to believe what he would, evil as well as good, concerning them, and to find for himself hope or despair. In determining therefore the views to which the mass of the common-folk inclined with regard to the relations of soul and body, little assistance can be obtained in the first instance from those personal opinions which literature has preserved to us, opinions emanating from poets and philosophers who were not of the people but consciously above them, and who set themselves some to expose, others to reform, the popular religion, but few simply to maintain it. The conservative force of the ancient religion lay in the inherited and almost instinctive beliefs of the common-folk; oral tradition weighed more with them than philosophic reasoning, and their tenacity of customs as barbarous even as human sacrifice defied the softening influences of an humaner civilisation.

That these characteristics of the ancient Greek folk are stamped equally upon the people of to-day is a fact which every page of this book has confirmed; and it is therefore by analysis of modern beliefs and customs relative to death that I propose to discover the fundamental ideas held by the Greek people from the beginning concerning the relations between soul and body. For I venture to think that the great teachers of antiquity, whose doctrines dominate ancient literature, were often more widely removed by their genius, than are the modern folk by the lapse of centuries, from the peasants of those early days, and that the oral tradition of a people who have instinctively clung to every ancient belief and custom is even after more than two thousand years a safer guide than the contemporary writings of men who deliberately discarded or arbitrarily modified tradition in favour of the results of their own personal speculations. First then the peasants of modern Greece must furnish our clue to the popular beliefs of antiquity; afterwards we may profitably consider the use and handling of those beliefs in ancient literature.

To this end I shall examine first and necessarily at some length a certain abnormal condition of the dead about which very definite ideas are everywhere held; for the abhorrence and dread with which the abnormal state is regarded will be an accurate measure of the eagerness with which the opposite and normal state is desired; and further in this desire to promote and to secure the normal condition of the departed will be found the motive of various funeral-customs.

This abnormal condition of the dead is a kind of vampirism. It is believed that under certain conditions a dead body is withheld from the normal process of corruption, is re-animated, and revisits the scenes of its former life, sometimes in a harmless or even kindly mood, but far more often bent on mischief and on murder. The superstition as it now stands is by no means wholly Greek or wholly popular. Two extraneous influences, the one Slavonic and the other ecclesiastical, have considerably modified it. But in the present section I shall confine myself to describing the appearance, nature, habits, and proper treatment of the Greek vampire as he is now conceived; the work of analysing the superstition and of separating the pure Hellenic metal from the extraneous alloys with which in its now current form it is contaminated will occupy the next section; and the two which follow will be devoted to showing that the native residue of superstition was in fact well known to the ancient Greeks and was utilised to no small extent in their literature.

The best accounts of this superstition and of the savage practices to which it led are furnished by writers of the seventeenth century. At the present day, though the superstition is far from extinction, the more violent outbreaks of it are comparatively rare; and, although stories dealing with it may frequently be heard, it might perhaps be difficult to piece together any complete and coherent account of the Greek vampire without a previous knowledge obtained from writers of two or three centuries ago. In such stories as I myself have heard I have found nothing new, and have often missed something with which older narratives had made me familiar. In the seventeenth century some parts of Greece would seem to have been infested by these vampires. The island of Santorini (the ancient Thera) acquired so enduring a notoriety in this respect, that even at the

present day 'to send vampires to Santorini[1]' is a proverbial expression synonymous with 'owls to Athens' or 'coals to Newcastle'; and the inhabitants of the island enjoyed so wide a reputation as experts in dealing with them, that two stories recently published[2], one from Myconos and the other from Sphakiá in Crete, actually end with the despatch of a vampire's body to Santorini for effective treatment there. The justice of this reputation will shortly appear; for one of the best accounts of the superstition was written by a Jesuit residing in the island, to whom the resurrection of these vampires seemed an unquestionable, if also inexplicable, phenomenon of by no means rare occurrence. Nowadays cases of suspected vampirism are much less common, and I can count myself very fortunate to have once witnessed the sequel of such a case. But of that more anon.

The most common form of the Greek name for this species of vampire is *βρυκόλακας*[3], and in order to avoid on the one hand continual qualification of the word 'vampire' (which I have used hitherto as the nearest though not exact equivalent) and on the other hand confusion of the Greek with the Slavonic species from which in certain traits it differs, I prefer henceforth to adopt a transliteration of the Greek word, and, save where I have occasion to speak of the purely Slavonic form of vampire, to employ the name *vrykólakas* (plural *vrykólakes*[4]).

The first of those writers of the seventeenth century whose accounts deserve attention is one to whose treatise on various Greek superstitions reference has already frequently been made, Leo Allatius. 'The *vrykolakas*,' he writes[5], 'is the body of a man of evil and immoral life—very often of one who has been excommunicated by his bishop. Such bodies do not like those of other dead men suffer decomposition after burial nor turn to dust,

[1] Heard by me from a fisherman of Myconos.

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. pp. 573 and 593.

[3] The list of dialectic forms compiled by Bern. Schmidt (*das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 158) comprises, besides that which I have adopted as in my experience the most general, the following: *βουρκόλακας*, *βρουκόλακας*, *βουρκούλακας*, *βουλκόλακας*, *βουθρόλακας*, *βουρδόλακας*, *βορβόλακας*. To these may be added *βαρβάλακας* from Syme (Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. 601), *βουρδούλακας*, from Cythnos (Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 125), and an occasional diminutive form such as *βρυκολάκι*. The *κ* is often doubled in spelling.

[4] A plural in *-οι*, *-ους*, with accent either paroxytone or proparoxytone, also occurs.

[5] *De quorumdam Graecorum opinationibus*, cap. 12 sqq.

but having, as it appears, a skin of extreme toughness become swollen and distended all over, so that the joints can scarcely be bent; the skin becomes stretched like the parchment of a drum, and when struck gives out the same sound; from this circumstance the *vrykolakas* has received the name τυμπανιαῖος ("drum-like")." Into such a body, he continues, the devil enters, and issuing from the tomb goes about, chiefly at night, knocking at doors and calling one of the household. If such an one answer, he dies next day; but a *vrykolakas* never calls twice, and so the inhabitants of Chios (whence Allatius' observations and information were chiefly derived) secure themselves by always waiting for a second call at night before replying. 'This monster is said to be so destructive to men, that appearing actually in the daytime, even at noon—and that not only in houses but in fields and highroads and enclosed vineyards—it advances upon them as they walk along, and by its mere aspect without either speech or touch kills them.' Hence, when sudden deaths occur without other assignable cause, they open the tombs and often find such a body. Thereupon 'it is taken out of the grave, the priests recite prayers, and it is thrown on to a burning pyre; before the supplications are finished the joints of the body gradually fall apart; and all the remains are burnt to ashes....' 'This belief,' he pursues, 'is not of fresh and recent growth in Greece; in ancient and modern times alike men of piety who have received the confessions of Christians have tried to root it out of the popular mind.'

As evidence of this statement he adduces a *nomocanon*, or ordinance of the Greek Church, of uncertain authorship:

'Concerning a dead man, if such be found whole and incorrupt, the which they call *vrykolakas*.

'It is impossible that a dead man become a *vrykolakas*, save it be that the Devil, wishing to delude some that they may do things unmeet and incur the wrath of God, maketh these portents, and oft-times at night causeth men to imagine that the dead man whom they knew before[1] cometh and speaketh with them, and in their dreams too they see visions. Other times they see him in the road, walking or standing still, and, more than this, he even throttles men.

[1] ὁποῦ τὸν ἐγνώριζε προτίτερα, leg. ἐγνώριζαν.

'Then there is a commotion and they run to the grave and dig to see the remains of the man...and the dead man—one who has long been dead and buried—appears to them to have flesh and blood and nails and hair...and they collect wood and set fire to it and burn the body and do away with it altogether....'

Then, after denying the reality of such things, which exist in imagination (*κατὰ φαντασίαν*) only, the *nomocanon* with some inconsistency continues: 'But know that when such remains be found, the which, as we have said, is a work of the Devil, ye must summon the priests to chant an invocation of the Mother of God,...and to perform memorial services for the dead with funeral-meats[1].'

Allatius then leaving the *nomocanon* pronounces his own views. 'It is the height of folly to deny altogether that such bodies are sometimes found in the graves incorrupt, and that by use of them the Devil, if God permit him, devises horrible plans to the hurt of the human race.' He therefore advocates the burning of them, always accompanied by prayers.

To the fact of non-decomposition he cites several witnesses —among them Crusius[2] who narrates the case of a Greek's body being found by Turks in this condition after the man had been two years dead and being burnt by them. Moreover Allatius himself claims to have been an eye-witness of such a scene when he was at school in Chios. A tomb having for some reason been opened at the church of St Antony, 'on the top of the bones of other men there was found lying a corpse perfectly whole; it was unusually tall of stature; clothes it had none, time or moisture having caused them to perish; the skin was distended, hard, and livid, and so swollen everywhere, that the body had no flat surfaces but was round like a full sack[3]. The face was covered with hair dark and curly; on the head there was little hair, as also on the rest of the body, which appeared smooth all over; the arms by reason of the swelling of the corpse were stretched out on each side like the arms of a cross; the hands

[1] For these memorial services (*μνημόσυνα*) and the appropriate funeral-meats (*κόλλυβα*) see below, pp. 534 ff.

[2] The reference given by Allatius is to *Turco-Grecia*, Bk 8, but I cannot find the passage.

[3] With this description compare a phrase used in a recent Athenian account of a *vrykolakas*, *σὰν τουλοῦμι*, 'like a (distended) wine-skin,' Πολίτης, Παραδ. I. 575.

were open, the eyelids closed, the mouth gaping, and the teeth white.' How the body was finally treated or disposed of is not related.

The next writer whose testimony deserves notice and respect is Father François Richard, a Jesuit priest of the island of Santorini, to whose work on that island reference has above been made[1]. Agreeing with Allatius in his description of the appearance of *vrykolakes*, he adds thereto many instances of their unpleasantly active habits. His whole narrative bears the stamp of good faith, but is too long to translate in full; and I must therefore content myself with a *précis* of it, indicating by inverted commas such phrases and sentences as are literally rendered.

The Devil, he says[2], works by means of dead bodies as well as by living sorcerers. 'These bodies he animates and preserves for a long time in their entirety; he appears with the face of the dead, traversing now the streets and anon the open country; he enters men's houses, leaving some horror-stricken, others deprived of speech, and others again lifeless; here he inflicts violence, there loss, and everywhere terror.' At first I believed these apparitions to be merely the souls of the dead returning to ask help to escape the sooner from Purgatory; but such souls never commit such excesses—assault, destruction of property, death, and so forth. It is clearly then a form of diabolical possession; for indeed the priests with the bishop's permission employ forms of exorcism. They assemble on Saturday (the only day on which *vrykolakes* rest in the grave and cannot stir abroad) and exhume the body which is suspected. 'And when they find it whole, fresh, and full of blood, they take it as certain that it was serving as an instrument of the Devil.' They accordingly continue their exorcisms until with the departure of the Devil the body begins to decompose and gradually to lose 'its colour and its *embonpoint*, and is left a noisome and ghastly lump.' So rapid was the decomposition in the case of a Greek priest's daughter, Caliste by name, that no one could remain in the church, and the body was hastily re-interred; from that time she ceased to appear.

[1] See p. 339.

[2] *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable a Sant-Erini Isle de l'Archipel, depuis l'établissement des Peres de la compagnie de Jesus en icelle* (Paris, MDCLVII.), cap. XV. pp. 208—226.

When exorcisms fail, they tear the heart out, cut it to pieces, and then burn the whole body to ashes.

At Stampalia (Astypalaea), he proceeds, a short time before my arrival (about the middle of the seventeenth century) five bodies were so treated, those of three married men, a Greek monk, and a girl. In Nio (Ios) a woman who was confessing to me affirmed that she had seen her husband again fifty days after burial, though already his grave had been once changed and the ordinary rites performed to lay him. He began however again to torment the people, killing actually some four or five; so his body was exhumed for the second time and was publicly burnt. Only two years ago they burnt two bodies in the island of Siphanto for the same reason; 'and rarely does a year pass in which people do not speak with dread of these false resuscitations.' In Santorini a shoemaker named Alexander living at Pyrgos became a *vrykolakas*; he used to frequent his house, mend his children's shoes, draw water at the reservoir, and cut wood for the use of his family; but the people became frightened, exhumed him, and burned him, and he was seen no more...In Amorgos these *vrykolakes* have been seen not only at night but in open day, five or six together in a field, feeding apparently on green beans.

I heard, continues the holy father, from the Abbé of the famous monastery of Amorgos, that a certain merchant of Patmos, having gone abroad on business, died. His widow sent a boat to bring his body home. Now it so happened that one of the sailors sat down by accident upon the coffin and to his horror felt the body move. They opened the coffin therefore and found the body intact. Their fears being thus confirmed, they nailed up the coffin again and handed it over to the widow without a word and it was buried. But soon the dead man began to appear at night in the houses, violent and turbulent to such a degree that more than fifteen persons died of fright or of injuries inflicted by it. The exorcisms of priests and monks proved useless, and they thought best to send back the body whence it had been brought. The sailors however unshipped it at the first desert island[1] and burnt it there, after which it was seen no more.

[1] In many places at the present day it is believed that *vrykolakes* (and sometimes other supernatural beings) cannot cross salt water. Hence to bury (not burn) the corpse in an island is often held sufficient.

The Abbé considered this possession by the devil to be a proof of the truth of the Greek persuasion, alleging that no Mohammedan or Roman Catholic ever became a *vrykolakas*[1]. This however is not strictly accurate, for in Santorini a Roman priest, who had apostatized and turned Mohammedan and who for his many crimes was finally hanged, appeared after death and was only disposed of by burning.

Another case was that of Iannetis Anapliotis of the same island, an usurer who about a year before his death repented of his misdeeds and made what amends he could; he also left his wife an order to pay anything else justly reclaimed from him. She however though giving much in charity did not pay his debts. It was just six weeks after his death when she refused to satisfy some just claim for repayment, and immediately he began to appear in the streets and to molest above all his own wife and relatives. Also he woke up priests early in the morning, telling them it was time for matins, pulled coverlets off people as they slept, shook their beds, left the taps of wine-barrels running, and so on. One woman was so frightened in broad day-light as to lose the power of speech for three days, and another whose bed he shook suffered a miscarriage. Then at length his name was published—for as a man of some position he had till then been spared. Exorcism was tried in vain by the Greek priests. Then by my advice the widow paid off all her husband's debts and made due restitution. Also she had the body exhumed and exorcised a second time. On this occasion I saw it, but it did not look like a real *vrykolakas*; for, though the hands were whole and parchment-like, the head and the entrails were to some extent decomposed. At the end of the ceremony of exorcism the priests hacked the body to pieces and buried it in a new grave. From this time the *vrykolakas* never re-appeared, but this was due, in my opinion, to the restitution made, not to the treatment of the body.

There are in Greek cemeteries dead bodies of another kind which after fifteen or sixteen years—sometimes even twenty or thirty—are found inflated like balloons, and when they are thrown

[1] Some modern authorities state that Turks are believed to be more subject to become *vrykolakes* than Christians. Schmidt (*Das Volksleben*, p. 162) appears to me to overstate this point of view, which I should judge to be rarer and more local than its contrary. Even where found, it is unimportant, being a mere invention of priestcraft for purposes of intimidation. See below, pp. 400 and 409.

on the ground or rolled along, sound like drums; for this reason they have the name *ντουπί*[1] (drum).... The common opinion of the Greeks is that this inflation is a sure sign that the man had suffered excommunication; and indeed Greek priests and bishops add always to the formula of excommunication the curse, *καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἄλυτος καὶ ἀπαράλυτος*, 'and after death to remain indissoluble[2].'

In a manuscript from the Church of St Sophia at Thessalonica, he continues, I found the following:

'Οποῖος ἔχει ἐντολὴν ἢ κατάραν, κρατοῦσι μόνον τὰ ἔμπροσθεν τοῦ σώματός του.

'Εκεῖνος ὁποῦ ἔχει ἀνάθεμα, φαίνεται κιτρινὸς καὶ ζαρωμένα τὰ δακτύλιά του.

'Εκεῖνος ὁποῦ φαίνεται ἀσπρὸς[3] (*sic*), εἶναι ἀφωρισμένος παρὰ τῶν θείων νόμων.

'Εκεῖνος ὁποῦ φαίνεται μαῦρος, εἶναι ἀφωρισμένος ὑπὸ ἀρχιερέως.

'He who has left a command of his parents unfulfilled or is under their curse has only the front portions of his body preserved.

'He who is under an anathema looks yellow and his fingers are wrinkled.

'He who looks white has been excommunicated by divine laws.

'He who looks black has been excommunicated by a bishop.'

From this account it is manifest that Father Richard, with the experience acquired by residence in Santorini, drew a distinction not known to Leo Allatius between two classes of dead persons. Those, who though not subject to the natural law of decomposition lay quiescent in their graves, were merely *τυμπανιαῖοι* or 'drum-like'; while *vrykolakes* proper were addicted also to periodical resurrection. And the extract with which he concludes his description shows that the authorities of the rival Church pretended to powers of even more subtle discrimination between different species of incorrupt corpses. The importance of Father Richard's distinction will appear later; there was originally a difference in the usage of the two words, although not precisely the difference which he makes; but by the middle of the seventeenth century popular speech rarely discriminated between them. To the common-folk, whose views Leo Allatius fairly presents, any body which was withheld from decomposition for any cause was at least a potential *vrykolakas*, even if its power of resurrection was

[1] Evidently a local form of *τουμπί* (=*τύμπανον*, cf. Du Cange, *Med. et infim. Graec.*, s.v. *τυμπανίτης*), with metathesis of the nasal. Cf. the word *τυμπανιαῖος* above.

[2] To this phrase I return later.

[3] leg. *ἄσπρος*.

not known to have been exerted and no act of violence had been traced to it.

For further attestation of the prevalence and the violence of this superstition it would be easy to quote many graphic accounts by other writers, such as Robert Sauger[1], another Jesuit of Santorini, or the traveller Tournefort[2]. But it will suffice to call as witness Paul Lucas, whose observations concern a part of the Greek world remote enough from either Chios or Santorini, the island of Corfu. 'Some persons,' he says, 'who seem possessed of sound good sense speak of a curious thing which often happens in this place, as also in the island of Santorini. According to their account dead persons return and show themselves in open day, going even into the houses and inspiring great terror in those who see them. In consequence of this, whenever one of these apparitions is seen, the people go at once to the cemetery to exhume the corpse, which is then cut in pieces and finally is burnt by sentence of the Governors and Magistrates. This done, these quasi-dead return no more. Monsieur Angelo Edme, Warden and Governor of the island, assured me that he himself had pronounced a sentence of this kind in a case where upwards of fifty reasonable persons were found to testify to the occurrence[3].'

The superstition, which had so firm a grip upon the Greeks of two or three centuries ago, has by no means relaxed its hold at the present day, in spite of the efforts made by the higher authorities civil and ecclesiastical, native and foreign, to suppress those savage and gruesome ceremonies to which it leads. The horrible scenes of old time, when the suspected body was dragged from its grave and dismembered by a panic-stricken and desperate mob, when the heart, as sometimes happened, was torn out and boiled to shreds in vinegar, or when the ghastly remains were burnt on a public bonfire, have certainly become rarer. The administrative action of the Venetians in the Ionian Islands in requiring proof to be furnished of the *vrykolakas*' resuscitation, and official sanction to be obtained for exhuming and burning the body; the more vigorous suppression

[1] *Histoire nouvelle des anciens ducs et autres souverains de l'Archipel*, pp. 255–6 (Paris, 1699).

[2] *Voyage du Levant*, I. pp. 158 ff. (Lyon, 1717). Cf. also Salonis, *Voyage à Tine* (Paris, 1809), translated by Δ. Μ. Μαυρομαρᾶς, as Ἱστορία τῆς Τήνου, pp. 105 ff.

[3] Paul Lucas, *Voyage du Levant* (la Haye, 1705), vol. II. pp. 209—210.

of such acts by the Turks in the Aegean Islands[1] and probably also on the mainland; the somewhat half-hearted condemnation of the superstition by the Greek Church, which, as we shall see later, maintained the belief in the non-decomposition of excommunicated persons and notorious sinners, hesitated between denying and explaining the further notion that such persons were liable to re-animation, but certainly endeavoured to repress or to mitigate the atrocities to which that notion led; and at the present day the forces of law and order as represented on the one hand by the police and on the other by modern education, the chief fruit of which is a desire to appear 'civilised' in the eyes of Europe; all these influences combined have certainly succeeded in reducing the proportions of the superstition and curtailing the excesses consequent upon it. Thus in some places the old practice of burning corpses which fail to decompose within the normal period —and it must be remembered that exhumation after three years' burial is an established rite of the Church in Greece—has been definitely superseded by milder expedients. In Scyros the body is carried round to forty churches in turn and is then re-interred, while in parts of Crete, in Cythnos[2], and, I believe, in some other Aegean Islands the custom is to transfer the body to a grave in some uninhabited islet, whence its return is barred by the intervening salt water.

None the less the superstition itself still holds a firm place among the traditional beliefs of modern Greece. Witness the following account of it from a history[3] of the district of Sphakiá in Crete written by the head of a monastery there and published in 1888:

'It is popularly believed that most of the dead, those who have lived bad lives or who have been excommunicated by some priest (or, worse still, by seven priests together, *τὸ ἑπταπάπαδον*[4]) become *vrykolakes*[5]; that is to say, after the separation of the soul from the body there enters into the latter an evil

[1] Cf. Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, I. p. 164 (Lyon, 1717).
[2] Ἀντών. Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 125.
[3] Γρηγ. Παπαδοπετράκης, Ἱστορία τῶν Σφακίων, pp. 72–3.
[4] The writer points out in a note the correspondence of the number of priests who assemble for *τὸ εὐχέλαιον*, the anointing of the sick with oil.
[5] The Cretan word used throughout this passage is *καταχαν-ᾶς* (plur. *-ᾶδες*), on which see below, p. 382.

spirit, which takes the place of the soul and assumes the shape of the dead man and so is transformed into a *vrykolakas* or man-demon.

'In this guise it keeps the body as its dwelling-place and preserves it from corruption, and it runs swift as lightning wherever it lists, and causes men great alarms at night and strikes all with panic. And the trouble is that it does not remain solitary, but makes everyone, who dies while it is about, like to itself, so that in a short space of time it gets together a large and dangerous train of followers. The common practice of the *vrykolakes* is to seat themselves upon those who are asleep and by their enormous weight to cause an agonizing sense of oppression. There is great danger that the sufferer in such cases may expire, and himself too be turned into a *vrykolakas,* if there be not someone at hand who perceives his torment and fires off a gun, thereby putting the blood-thirsty monster to flight; for fortunately it is afraid of the report of fire-arms and retreats without effecting its purpose. Not a few such scenes we have witnessed with our own eyes.

'This monster, as time goes on, becomes more and more audacious and blood-thirsty, so that it is able completely to devastate whole villages. On this account all possible haste is made to annihilate the first which appears before it enter upon its second period of forty days[1], because by that time it becomes a merciless and invincible dealer of death. To this end the villagers call in priests who profess to know how to annihilate the monster —for a consideration. These impostors proceed after service to the tomb, and if the monster be not found there—for it goes to and fro molesting men—they summon it in authoritative tones to enter its dwelling-place; and, as soon as it is come, it is imprisoned there by virtue of some prayer and subsequently breaks up. With its disruption all those who have been turned into *vrykolakes* by it, wherever they may be, suffer the same lot as their leader.

'This absurd superstition is rife and vigorous throughout Crete and especially in the mountainous and secluded parts of the island.'

[1] *διπλοσαραντίση.* I have given what I take to be the meaning of a popular word otherwise unknown to me.

So too another well-informed Greek writer, who has published a series of monographs upon the Cyclades, says in one of them[1]:

'The ignorant peasant of Andros believes to this day that the corpse can rise again and do him hurt; and is not this belief in *vrykolakes* general throughout Greece?'

To that question I might without hesitation answer 'yes,' even on the grounds of my own experience only; for the places in which I have heard *vrykolakes* mentioned, not merely in popular stories[2] such as are told everywhere, but with a very present and real sense of dread, include some villages on the west slopes of Mount Pelion, the village of Leonidi on the east coast of the Peloponnese, Andros, Tenos, Santorini, and Cephalonia.

The wide range and general prevalence of the superstition in modern times being thus established, it remains only to record a few recent cases in which the peasants, in defiance of law and order, have gone the length of exhuming and burning the suspected body.

Theodore Bent[3] states that a few months before his visit to Andros (somewhat over twenty years ago) the grave of a suspected *vrykolakas* was opened by a priest and the body taken out, cut into shreds, and burnt. In January of 1895 at Mantoúde in Euboea a woman was believed to have turned *vrykolakas* and to have caused many deaths, and the peasants resolved to exhume and burn her—but it is not stated whether the resolve was actually carried out[4]. In 1899, when I was in Santorini, I was told that two or three years previously the inhabitants of Therasia had burnt a *vrykolakas*, and when I visited that island the incident was not denied but the responsibility for it was laid upon the people of Santorini. In 1902 there was a similar case of burning at Gourzoúmisa near Patras[5]. These are certain and well-attested instances of the continuance of the practice, and, regard being had to the secrecy which such breaches of the law necessarily demand, it is not unreasonable to suppose that even now a year seldom passes in which some village of Greece does

[1] Ἀντ. Μηλιαράκης, Ὑπομνήματα περιγραφικὰ τῶν Κυκλάδων νήσων.—Ἄνδρος, Κέως, p. 56.

[2] Good examples may be found in Bern. Schmidt, *Märchen*, etc., no. 7, and Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. 590 sqq.

[3] *The Cyclades*, p. 299.

[4] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 577.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 578.

not disembarrass itself of a *vrykolakas* by the traditional means, cremation[1].

Of the causes by which a man is predisposed to become a *vrykolakas* some mention has already been made in the passages which have been cited from various writers above; but before I conclude this account of the superstition as it now is and has been since the seventeenth century, and proceed to analyse its composite nature, it may be convenient to give a complete list of such causes. The majority of these are recognised all over Greece and are familiar to every student of modern Greek folklore, and I shall not therefore burden this chapter with references to previous writers whose observations tally exactly with my own; for rarer and more local beliefs I shall of course quote my authority.

The classes of persons who are most liable to become *vrykolakes* are:

(1) Those who do not receive the full and due rites of burial.

(2) Those who meet with any sudden or violent death (including suicides), or, in Maina[2], where the *vendetta* is still in vogue, those who having been murdered remain unavenged.

(3) Children conceived or born on one of the great Church-festivals[3], and children stillborn[4].

(4) Those who die under a curse, especially the curse of a parent, or one self-invoked, as in the case of a man who, in perjuring himself, calls down on his own head all manner of damnation if what he says be false.

(5) Those who die under the ban of the Church, that is to say, excommunicate.

(6) Those who die unbaptised or apostate[5].

(7) Men of evil and immoral life in general, more particularly if they have dealt in the blacker kinds of sorcery.

[1] In Scyros and in Cythnos, as I have noted above, this means of riddance has given place to milder remedies. But in the former I heard of fairly recent cases of vampirism, and in the latter, according to Βάλληνδας (Κυθνιακά, p. 125), the names of several persons (including one woman) who became *vrykolakes* are still remembered.

[2] Communicated to me by word of mouth in Maina.

[3] *ἑορτοπιάσματα* (see above, p. 208), who are commonly regarded as subject to lycanthropy in life and continue the same predatory habits as vampires after death.

[4] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben*, p. 162 (from Aráchova).

[5] This belief belongs chiefly, in my experience, to the Cyclades.

(8) Those who have eaten the flesh of a sheep which was killed by a wolf[1].

(9) Those over whose dead bodies a cat or other animal has passed[2].

The *provenance* and the significance of these various beliefs concerning the causes of vampirism will be discussed in the next section.

## § 2. The Composition of the Superstition. Slavonic, Ecclesiastical, and Hellenic Contributions.

*Vrykolakes* are not ghosts. Such is the first observation which I am compelled to make and which the reader of the last chapter might well consider superfluous. But so many Greek writers, and with them even Bernhard Schmidt[3], have fallen into the error of comparing ancient ghost-stories with modern tales about *vrykolakes*, without apparently recognising the essential and fundamental difference between them, that some insistence upon the point is necessary. That a definite and close relation does indeed subsist between the ancient belief in wandering spirits and the modern belief in wandering corpses, I readily admit, and with that relation I shall deal later; but the issue before us can only be kept clear by remembering that *vrykolakes* are not ghosts. There is absolute unanimity among the Greek peasants in their belief that the corpse itself is the *vrykolakas*, and even the work of re-animating the corpse is generally credited not to the soul which formerly inhabited it, but to the Devil. Thus it appears that whereas most peoples believe to some extent in the return of the ghosts or spirits of the dead, the Greeks fear rather the return of their bodies. If then we can determine what part, if any, of this superstition is genuinely Hellenic, we shall have gained a step in our knowledge of the ideas popularly held in ancient Greece concerning the condition and the relations of soul and body after death.

The view which I take is briefly this, that though Slavonic

[1] Curt. Wachsmuth, *Das alte Griechenland im Neuen*, p. 117 (from Elis).
[2] *Ibid.* p. 114 (from Elis). Bern. Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 162 (Parnassus district). Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, i. 578 (Calávryta).
[3] *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 170.

influence is very conspicuous in the modern superstition as I have described it, yet the whole superstition has not been transplanted root and branch from Slavonic to Greek soil, but the growth, as we now see it and as the writers of the seventeenth century saw it, is the result of the grafting of Slavonic branches upon an Hellenic stock; and further, that before that process began the old pagan Greek element in the superstition had been modified in certain respects by ecclesiastical influence. This is the view which I propose to develop in this section; and my method will be to work back from the modern superstition, removing first the Slavonic and then the ecclesiastical elements in it, and so leaving a residue of purely Hellenic belief.

To Slavonic influence is due first of all the actual word *vrykolakas*, the derivation of which need not long detain us. Patriotic attempts have indeed been made by Greeks to deny its Slavonic origin, the most plausible being that of Coraës[1], who selecting the local form *βορβόλακας* sought to identify it with a supposed ancient form *μορμόλυξ* (= *μορμολύκη*, *μορμολυκεῖον*), a 'bugbear' or 'hobgoblin' of some kind. But there need be no hesitation in pronouncing this suggestion wrong and in asserting the identity of the modern Greek word with a word which runs through all the Slavonic languages. This word is in form a compound of which the first half means 'wolf' and the second has been less certainly identified with *dlaka*, the 'hair' of a cow or horse. But, however the meaning of the compound has been obtained, it is, in the actual usage of all Slavonic languages save one, the exact equivalent of our 'were-wolf[2].' That one exception is the Serbian

[1] This derivation is reviewed and rejected by Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben* etc., p. 158.

[2] Cf. Miklosich, *Etym. Wörterbuch d. Slav. Spr.*, p. 380, s.v. *velkŭ, Old Slav., vlъkъ, *wolf*.....

Old Slav., vlъkodlakъ; Slovenian, volkodlak, vukodlak, vulkodlak; Bulg., vrъkolak; Kr., vukodlak; Serb., vukodlak; Cz., vlkodlak; Pol., wilkodłak; Little Russian, vołkołak; White Russian, vołkołak; Russian, volkulakъ; Roum. vĕlkolak, verkolak; Alb., vurvolak; cf. Lith., vilkakis.

'Der vlъkodlak ist der Werwolf der Deutschen, woraus m. Lat. guerulfus, mannwolf, der in Wolfgestalt gespenstisch umgehende Mann.' The second half of the compound is less certainly identified with *dlaka*, Old Slav., New Slav., Serb., = 'hair' (of cow or horse).

I am indebted for this note to the kindness of Mr E. H. Minns, of Pembroke College, Cambridge. It will be found to corroborate the view pronounced by B. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 159.

language in which it is said to bear rather the sense of 'vampire[1].' If this is true, the reason for the transition of meaning lies probably in the belief current among the Slavonic peoples in general that a man who has been a were-wolf in his lifetime becomes a vampire after death[2]. Yet in general there is no confusion of nomenclature. Although the depredations of the were-wolf and of the vampire are similar in character, the line of demarcation between the living and the dead is kept clear, and the great mass of the Slavonic peoples apply only to the living that word from which the Greek *vrykolakas* comes, and to the dead the word which we have borrowed in the form 'vampire[3].'

Now among the Greeks the latter word is almost unknown; in parts of Macedonia indeed where the Greek population lives in constant touch with Slavonic peoples, a form *βάμπυρας* or *βόμπυρας* has been adopted and is used as a synonym of *vrykolakas* in its ordinary Greek sense[4]; but in Greece proper and in the Greek islands the word 'vampire' is, so far as I can discover, absolutely non-existent, and it is *vrykolakas* which ordinarily denotes the resuscitated corpse. In discriminating therefore between the Slavonic and the Greek elements in the modern Greek superstition it is of some importance to determine in which sense the Greeks originally borrowed the word *vrykolakas* which at the present day they in general employ in a different sense from that which both etymology and general Slavonic usage accord to it. Was it originally borrowed in the sense of 'were-wolf' or in the sense of 'vampire'?

Among Slavonic peoples the only one said to have transferred the word *vrykolakas* from its original meaning to that of 'vampire' is the Serbian; and the Greeks therefore, in order to have borrowed the word in that sense, would have had to borrow direct from the Serbian language. But linguistic evidence renders that hypothesis untenable. All the many Greek dialectic forms of the word *vrykolakas* concur in showing a liquid (ρ or λ) in the

[1] Bern. Schmidt, *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 160 (with note 1).

[2] Ralston, *Songs of the Russian people*, p. 409.

[3] Whether this word is originally Slavonic appears to be uncertain, but it is at any rate found in all Slavonic languages and is proved by the forms which it has assumed to have been in use there for fully a thousand years. This note also I owe to my friend, Mr Minns.

[4] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 217.

first syllable; while Serbian is among the two or three Slavonic languages which have discarded that liquid. It follows therefore that the Greeks borrowed the word from some Slavonic language other than Serbian, and consequently from some language which used and still uses that word in the sense of 'were-wolf.'

Further, there is evidence that in the Greek language itself the word *vrykolakas* does even now locally and occasionally bear its original significance. This usage indeed is flatly denied by Bernhard Schmidt, who, having accurately distinguished the were-wolf and the vampire, states that 'the modern Greek *vrykolakas* answers only to the latter[1].' This pronouncement however was made in the face of two strong pieces of independent evidence to the contrary, which Schmidt notices and dismisses in a footnote[2]. The first witness is Hanush[3], who was plainly told by a Greek of Mytilene that there were two kinds of *vrykolakes*, the one kind being men already dead, and the other still living men who were subject to a kind of somnambulism and were seen abroad particularly on moonlight nights. The other authority is Cyprien Robert[4], who describes the *vrykolakes* of Thessaly and Epirus thus: 'These are living men mastered by a kind of somnambulism, who seized by a thirst for blood go forth at night from their shepherd's-huts, and scour the country biting and tearing all that they meet both man and beast.'

To these two pieces of testimony—strong enough, it might be thought, in their mutual agreement to merit more than passing notice and arbitrary rejection—I can add confirmation of more recent date. In Cyprus, during excavations carried out in the spring of 1899 under the auspices of the British Museum, the directors of the enterprise heard from their workmen several stories dealing with the detection of a *vrykolakas*. The outline of these stories (to which Tenos furnishes many parallels[5], though in these latter I have not found the word *vrykolakas* employed) is as follows. The inhabitants of a particular village, having suffered from various nocturnal depredations, determine to keep watch at night for the marauder. Having duly armed themselves they maintain a strict vigil, and are rewarded by seeing a *vrykolakas*.

[1] *Das Volksleben d. Neugr.* p. 159. [2] *Ibid.* note 2.
[3] Mannhardt's *Zeitschrift f. d. Mythol. und Sittenk.* IV. 195.
[4] *Les Slaves de Turquie*, I. p. 69 (Paris, 1844). [5] Cf. above, p. 183.

Thereupon one of them with gun or sword succeeds in inflicting a wound upon the monster, which however for the nonce escapes. But the next day a man of the village, who had not been among the watchers of the night, is observed to bear a wound exactly corresponding with that which the assailant of the *vrykolakas* had dealt; and being taxed with it the man confesses himself to be a *vrykolakas*.

Similarly on the borders of Aetolia and Acarnania, in the neighbourhood of Agrinion, I myself ascertained that the word *vrykolakas* was occasionally applied to living persons in the sense of were-wolf, although there as elsewhere it more commonly denotes a resuscitated corpse. Lycanthropy, as has been observed in a previous chapter[1], is in Greece often imputed to children. In the district mentioned this is conspicuously the case. If one or more children in a family die without evident cause, the mother will often regard the smallest or weakliest of the survivors—more especially one in any way deformed or demented—as guilty of the brothers' or sisters' deaths, and the suspect is called a *vrykolakas*. Εἶσαι βρυκόλακας καὶ 'φάγες τὸν ἀδερφό σου, 'you are a *vrykolakas* and have devoured your brother,' is the charge hurled at the helpless infant, and ill-treatment to match is meted out in the hope of deterring it from its blood-thirsty ways.

In effect from four widely separated parts of the Greek world —Mytilene, Cyprus, the neighbourhood of Agrinion, and the district of Thessaly and Epirus—comes one and the same statement, that to the word *vrykolakas* is still, or has recently been, attached its etymologically correct meaning 'were-wolf'; and, since these isolated local usages cannot be explained otherwise than as survivals of an usage which was once general, they constitute a second proof that the Greeks originally adopted the word in the sense in which the vast majority of the Slavonic races continue down to this day to employ it.

But while it is thus certain that the Greeks first learnt and acquired the word *vrykolakas* in the sense of 'were-wolf,' it is equally certain that the main characteristics of the monster to which that name is now applied are those of the Slavonic 'vampire.'

[1] Cf. pp. 183 and 208.

The appearance and the habits of the re-animated corpse according to Slavonic superstition differ hardly at all from those described in the last chapter. Indeed the question is not so much whether the Greeks are indebted to the Slavs in respect of this belief, as what is the extent of their indebtedness. Is the whole superstition a foreign importation, or is it only partly alien and partly native?

The former alternative is rendered improbable in the first place by the fact that the Greeks have not adopted the word 'vampire.' If the whole idea of dead men remaining under certain conditions incorrupt and emerging from their graves to work havoc among living men had been first communicated to them by the Slavs, they must almost inevitably have borrowed the name by which the Slavs described those men. But since in fact they did not adopt the Slavonic name 'vampire,' it is probable that they already possessed in their own language some word adequate to express that idea, and therefore possessed also some native superstition concerning resuscitation of the dead which Slavonic influence merely modified.

Further, there is positive evidence that such a word or words existed; for there have been, and still are, dialects which employ a word of Greek formation in preference not merely to the word 'vampire,' which seems to be unknown in Greece proper, but even to the misapplied Slavonic word *vrykolakas*. Thus Leo Allatius was familiar with the word τυμπανιαῖος, 'drum-like,' but whether in his day it belonged especially to his native island Chios[1] or was still in general usage, he does not record. At the present day it survives only, so far as I know, in Cythnos, where also ἄλυτος, 'incorrupt,' is used as another synonym[2]. From Cythera are reported three names, ἀνάρραχο, λάμπασμα, and λάμπαστρο[3], evidently Greek in formation but to me, I must confess, unintelligible. In Cyprus (where, as we have seen, the word *vrykolakas*

[1] In Chios at the present day the word *vrykolakas* is in general usage, except that in the village of Pyrgi, owing to a confusion of *vrykolakes* and *callicantzari*, a local name of the latter is applied also to the former. Cf. Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, p. 367, and see above p. 193.

[2] Ἀντ. Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 125. The two words are given in the neuter plural τυμπανιαῖα and ἄλυτα, as equivalents of the word *vrykolakas* which, in the form βουρδούλακκας, is also employed.

[3] The periodical Παρνδώρα, vol. 12, no. 278, p. 335 and vol. 13, no. 308, p. 505, cited by Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 160.

may still bear its old sense 'were-wolf') the *revenant* is named σαρκωμένος[1], because his swollen appearance suggests that he has 'put on flesh,' or more rarely στοιχειωμένος[2], perhaps with the idea that he has become the 'genius' (στοιχειό)[3] of some particular locality. Again, from the village of Pyrgos in Tenos is reported the word ἀναικαθούμενος[4], meaning apparently one who 'sits up' in his grave. Finally, in Crete the name popularly employed is καταχανᾶς[5], the origin of which is not certain. Bernhard Schmidt[6], following Koraës[7], derives it from κατὰ and χάνω (= ancient Greek χαόω), 'lose,' 'destroy,' and would have it mean accordingly 'destroyer.' I would suggest that derivation from κατὰ and the root χαν-, 'gape,' 'yawn,' is at least equally probable, inasmuch as other local names such as τυμπανιαῖος, 'drumlike,' and σαρκωμένος, 'fleshy,' have reference to the monster's personal appearance, and the 'gaper' in like manner would be a name eminently suitable to a creature among whose features are numbered by Leo Allatius 'a gaping mouth and gleaming teeth[8].' The same name was some forty years ago[9], and probably still is, used in Rhodes, and in a Rhodian poem of the fifteenth century occurs both in its literal sense and as a term of abuse[10]. This secondary usage however is in no way a proof that the word meant originally 'destroyer' rather than 'gaper'; for by the fifteenth century there can be little doubt that the *revenant* was everywhere an object of horror, and therefore his name, whatever it originally meant, furnished a convenient term of vituperation. But one thing at least is clear, that καταχανᾶς, whichever

[1] Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 160, referring to Φιλίστωρ (periodical), III. p. 539; Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 574.

[2] Πολίτης, *ibid.*

[3] Cf. above, p. 277.

[4] Βάλληνδας in Ἐφημερὶς τῶν Φιλομαθῶν, 1861, p. 1828. Schmidt interprets the word as 'der Aufhockende,' one who sits upon and crushes his victims, a habit sometimes ascribed to *vrykolakes*, but more often to *callicantzari*. My own interpretation has the support of many popular stories, in which, when the exhumation of a *vrykolakas* takes place, he is found sitting up in his tomb. See e.g. Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 590.

[5] Cf. Χουρμούζης, Κρητικά, p. 27 (Athens, 1842); Γρηγ. Παπαδοπετράκης, Ἱστορία τῶν Σφακίων, pp. 72–3.

[6] *Op. cit.* p. 160.

[7] Ἄτακτα, II. p. 114.

[8] *Os hians, dentes candidi*, cf. above, p. 367.

[9] The word is mentioned by Newton, *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant*, I. p. 212. I have been unable to obtain any more recent information.

[10] Τὸ Θανατικὸν τῆς Ῥόδου (*The Black Death of Rhodes*), ll. 267 and 579, published in Wagner's *Medieval Greek Texts*, I. p. 179 (from Schmidt, *op. cit.* p. 160, note 4).

interpretation of it be right, is certainly a word of Greek origin no less than the others which I have enumerated.

Now all these dialectic Greek names are found, it will have been observed, only in certain of the Greek islands, while on the mainland *vrykolakas* has come to be universally employed. But it was the mainland which was particularly exposed to Slavonic immigration and influence, while islands like Crete and Cyprus were practically immune. Hence, while the mainland gradually adopted a Slavonic word, it was likely enough that some of the islands should retain their own Greek terms, even though in the course of their relations with the mainland they became acquainted also with the new Slavonic word. These insular names for the *vrykolakas* may therefore be regarded as survivals from a pre-Slavonic period, and, though they are now merely dialectic, it is reasonable to suppose that one or more of them formerly held a place in the language of mainlanders and islanders alike. But the existence of such words presupposes the existence of a belief in some kind of resuscitated beings denoted by them. In other words, the Greeks when first brought into contact with the Slavs already possessed a belief in the re-animation and activity of certain dead persons, which so far resembled the Slavonic belief in vampirism, that the Slavonic vampire could be adequately denoted by some Greek word or words already existing and there was no need to adopt the Slavonic name.

I claim then to have established two important points: first, that the word *vrykolakas* was originally borrowed by the Greeks from the Slavs in the sense of 'were-wolf,' though now it is almost universally employed in the sense of 'vampire'; secondly, that, whatever ideas concerning vampires the Greeks may have learnt from the Slavs, they did not adopt the Slavonic word 'vampire' but employed one of those native Greek words, such as τυμπανιαῖος or καταχανᾶς, which are still in local usage; whence it follows that some superstition anent re-animated corpses existed in Greece before the coming of the Slavs.

These points being established, I am now in a position to trace the development of the superstition in Greece from the time of the Slavonic immigrations onward, and to show how it came to pass that, whereas in the tenth century, let us say, when the Greeks had had ample time to imbibe Slavonic superstitions,

*vrykolakas* meant a 'were-wolf,' and a 'vampire' was denoted by τυμπανιαῖος or some other Greek word, nowadays *vrykolakas* almost always means a 'vampire' and τυμπανιαῖος is well-nigh obsolete.

The Slavs brought with them into Greece two superstitions, the one concerning were-wolves and the other concerning vampires. The old Hellenic belief in lycanthropy was apparently at that time weak—confined perhaps to a few districts only—for the Greeks borrowed from the invaders their word *vrykolakas* in the place of the old λυκάνθρωπος[1], by which to express the idea of a 'were-wolf.' They also learnt the Slavonic superstition concerning vampires, but in this case did not borrow the word 'vampire' but expressed the notion adequately by means of one of those words which now survive only in insular dialects—adequately, I say, but not exactly. For—and here I must anticipate what will be proved later—the Greeks denoted by those words a *revenant* but not a vampire. They believed in the incorruptibility and the re-animation of certain classes of dead men, but they did not impute to these *revenants* the savagery which is implied by the name 'vampire.' The dead who returned from their graves acted, it was held, as reasonable men, not as ferocious brutes. This did not of course exclude the idea that a *revenant* might return to seek revenge where vengeance was due; he was not necessarily peaceable; but if he exacted even the life of one who had wronged him, the act of vengeance was reasonable. To the proof of this, as I have said, I shall come later on; here I will only point out that the names which survive in the island-dialects are perfectly consistent with my view. Of the words τυμπανιαῖος, 'drumlike,' σαρκωμένος, 'fleshy,' στοιχειωμένος, '*genius*,' ἀναικαθούμενος, 'sitting up' in the grave, and, if my interpretation is right, καταχανᾶς, 'gaper,' not one suggests any inherent ferocity in the resuscitated dead.

Nevertheless, when the Greeks first heard of the Slavonic 'vampire,' they naturally regarded it merely as a new and particularly vicious species of the genus *revenant*. Their own words

[1] I have shown above (pp. 239 ff.) that in certain districts the word λυκάνθρωπος was superseded by a new Greek compound λυκοκάντζαρος; but this new term was probably always confined, as it now is, to the vocabulary of a few districts only, while the Slavonic word *vrykolakas* enjoyed a wider vogue.

for the genus implied no idea beyond that of the resuscitation of the dead, and were therefore no less applicable to the uniformly ferocious Slavonic variety than to the more reasonable and human type with which they themselves were familiar. They therefore did not require the word 'vampire,' but were content at first to comprise all *revenants*, whatever their character, under one or other of the existing Greek names.

Subsequently however, it appears, a change took place. The Slavonic superstition concerning were-wolves included then, we may suppose, as it includes now[1], the idea that were-wolves become after death vampires. The Greeks, who borrowed from the Slavs the very name of the were-wolf, must therewith have learnt that these *vrykolakes* as they then called them were among the classes of men who were liable to vampirism; and in this particular case it would surely have seemed natural to them that the *revenant* should be conspicuous for ferocity. The conduct of a reasonable being could not be expected after death from one who in his lifetime had suffered from lycanthropic mania; or rather, if there could be any reason in his conduct, the most reasonable and consistent thing would be for him to turn vampire.

Thus one class of *revenants* came to be distinguished in the now composite Greek superstition by its wanton and blood-thirsty character; and in order to mark this distinction in speech also the Greeks, it would seem, began to call one who from a were-wolf had become a genuine vampire by the same name after as before death, *vrykolakas*, while to the more reasonable and human *revenants* they still applied some such term as τυμπανιαῖοι, 'drum-like.'

By the seventeenth century the superstition had undergone a further change, which is reflected in the usage of the word τυμπανιαῖος. In proportion as the horror of real *vrykolakes* had grown and spread, the very memory of the more innocent kind of *revenants* had faded, until the genus *revenant* was represented only by the species *vrykolakas*. The word τυμπανιαῖος was indeed still known, but Leo Allatius was undoubtedly following the popular usage of his time when he made it synonymous with *vrykolakas*; for those narratives of the seventeenth century from which I have

[1] See above, p. 378.

quoted above make it abundantly clear that the common-folk had come to suspect all *revenants* alike of predatory propensities.

This change in popular beliefs placed the Church in an awkward predicament, and was the cause of a marked divergence between the popular and the clerical usages of the word τυμπανιαῖος. It had long been claimed that a sentence of excommunication was binding upon a man even beyond death and could arrest the natural process of decomposition; indeed the formula officially employed ended, as Father Richard of Santorini notes, with the phrase, 'and after death to remain indissoluble.' But when the fear of real vampires spread over Greece, the priests would naturally have been unwilling to be held responsible for the resuscitation of such pests, while they were equally unwilling to diminish the terrors of excommunication by omitting the final imprecation. Their only course therefore was to emphasize what seems indeed to have been always the authorised doctrine of the Church, that excommunicated persons remained indeed incorrupt and 'drum-like,' but were not, like *vrykolakes*, subject to diabolical re-animation. It is Father Richard's acceptance of this clerical view which explains why, writing as he did some few years after Leo Allatius, he distinguished the two words which Leo had treated as synonymous, making resuscitation the criterion of the *vrykolakas* and stating that the 'drum-like' body, though withheld from natural decay, lay quiet in its grave. But the ecclesiastical doctrine made no impression upon the popular belief; to this very day the common-folk regard any corpse which is found incorrupt as a potential *vrykolakas*, and excommunication is everywhere numbered among the causes of vampirism.

Thus it has come to pass that any *revenants* other than the savage *vrykolakes* are well-nigh forgotten, and in most districts their very name is no longer heard. The word *vrykolakes*, which first meant were-wolves, came to denote also the vampires into which were-wolves changed, and gradually, as these vampires by exciting men's horror and concentrating on themselves the people's attention became the predominant class of *revenants*, ousted from the very speech of Greece as a whole the old Greek names for the more harmless sort, and established itself as the regular equivalent of *revenant*.

Such is my solution of the somewhat complex problem of

nomenclature; and in presenting it I have incidentally stated my view that the genuinely Greek element in the modern superstition is a belief in the incorruptibility and re-appearance of dead persons under certain special conditions, and that the imported and now dominant element is the Slavonic belief that the resuscitation of the dead renders them necessarily predatory vampires. This I now have to prove.

It is a well-established characteristic of the Slavonic vampire that his violence is directed first and foremost against his nearest of kin. The same trait is so pronounced too in the modern Greek *vrykolakas* that it has given rise to the proverb, *ὁ βρυκόλακας ἀρχίζει ἀπὸ τὰ γένειά του*, 'the *vrykolakas* begins with his own beard'—a saying which carries a double meaning, so a peasant told me. It may be taken literally, inasmuch as the *vrykolakas* usually appears bald and beardless; but the words *τὰ γένειά του*, 'his beard,' are popularly understood as a substitute, half jocose and half euphemistic, for *τὴ γενεά του*, 'his family.' In other words, this most deadly of pagan pests, like the most lively of Christian virtues, begins at home.

Such being the acknowledged and even proverbial habits of the *vrykolakas*, nothing, it might be supposed, could be more repugnant and fearful to the near relations of a dead man than the possibility that he would turn *vrykolakas* and return straightway to devour them. The first sufferers from such an eventuality would be the man's own kinsfolk, the next his acquaintances and fellow-villagers, but he himself would appear to be aggressor rather than sufferer. Nevertheless, in face of this consideration, there is no more commodious form of curse in popular usage than the ejaculation of a prayer that the person who has incurred one's displeasure may be withheld from corruption after death and return from his grave. I have heard it extended even to a recalcitrant mule; but it is also used gravely by parents as an imprecation of punishment hereafter upon undutiful children. A few samples of this curse will not be out of place, as showing at once its frequency and its range[1].

*Νὰ μήν του δεχτῇ ἡ γῆς*, 'May the earth not receive him':

[1] I quote my authority only for choice specimens which I have not myself heard. Variations may be found in almost any work bearing on popular speech or belief.

*νὰ μήν τον φάγῃ τὸ χῶμα*, 'May the ground not consume him': *ἡ γῆ νὰ μή σε χωνέψῃ*[1], 'May the earth not digest thee': *ἡ μαύρη γῆ νά σ' ἀναξεράσῃ*[2], 'May the black earth spew thee up': *νὰ μείνῃς ἄλυωτος*, 'Mayest thou remain incorrupt': *νὰ μή σε λυώσῃ ἡ γῆ*, 'May the earth not loose thee' (i.e. not let thy body decompose): *νά σε βγάλῃ τὸ χῶμα*, 'May the ground reject thee': *κουτοῦκι νὰ βγῇς*[3], 'Mayest thou become (after death) like a log (in solidity)': *τὸ χῶμα 'ξεράσ' τόνε*, 'May the ground spew him out'—this last phrase being made more terrible by being a parody, as it were, of the prayer uttered by the mourners at every Greek funeral *ὁ θεὸς 'χωρέσ' τόνε*, 'May God forgive him.' Such are the popular forms of the curse; and akin to them are the ecclesiastical imprecations, with which the formula of excommunication used to end: *καὶ ἔσῃ μετὰ θάνατον ἄλυτος αἰωνίως, ὡς αἱ πέτραι καὶ τὰ σίδηρα*[4], 'And after death thou shalt be bound (i.e. incorrupt) eternally, even as stone and iron'; or, in a shorter form, *καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἄλυτος καὶ ἀπαράλυτος*[5], 'And after death bound and indissoluble.' Here, it will be observed, the Church spoke only of incorruptibility, but several of the popular expressions contain explicit mention of resuscitation as well; and the very forms of the curse which I have quoted show how closely knit together, how almost identical, are these two notions in the mind of the peasants. That which the earth will not 'receive,' she necessarily 'rejects'; that which she does not 'consume' or 'digest,' she necessarily 'spews up.' The man whose body does not decompose is necessarily a *revenant*.

Now curses, it must be remembered, among a primitive people are considered as operative, and not merely expletive; each bullet of malediction deliberately aimed is expected to find its billet; each imprecation seriously uttered has a magical power of fulfilling itself. That this belief is firmly held by the Greek folk is sufficiently proved by certain quaint solemnities enacted beside the deathbed. It is a common custom[6] for a dying man to put a handful of salt into a vessel of water, and when it is dissolved to

[1] Δελτίον τῆς Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρίας, II. 123 (from Crete). [2] *Ibid.*
[3] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, Ἡ Σινασός, p. 199 (from Sinasos in Asia Minor).
[4] Christophorus Angelus, *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum*, cap. 25.
[5] Cf. above, p. 370.
[6] In the details of my account of this custom I follow Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, pp. 113—114. But it prevails also in substantially the same form in many places besides Cythnos.

sprinkle with the liquid all those who are present, saying, ὡς λυώνει τ' ἀλάτι, νὰ λυώσουν ἡ κατάραις μου, 'As the salt dissolves, so may my curses dissolve.' By this ceremony all persons whom he has cursed are released from the bonds of an imprecation which after death he would no longer be able to revoke or annul. Then in turn the relations and friends formally pronounce their forgiveness of aught that the dying man has done to their hurt. Thus pardoning and pardoned the sick man may expect a short and easy passing; and, if the death-struggle be prolonged, it is taken as a sign that some one whom he has injured has not forgiven him. Accordingly the friends and kinsmen, having decided among themselves who the delinquent must be, send to fetch him, if he be still living, in order that he too may pronounce his forgiveness and so smooth the passage of the parting soul. If however he be dead, a portion of his shroud or of his ashes is brought and burnt, and the sick man, who needs his forgiveness ere he can die in peace, is fumigated with the smoke therefrom.

Since then curses in general are regarded by the Greek folk no less than by other primitive peoples as effective instruments of wrath which work out their own fulfilment, the particular curses which we are considering, when they are gravely uttered, do seriously contemplate the possibility of the person cursed becoming after death a *revenant* and are designed to bring about that future state.

But, if already at the time when such imprecations first became popular it had been believed that their effect was to render the corpse, whose decay was arrested and whose resuscitation was assured, a wanton and blood-thirsty monster, preying first of all upon his nearest of kin, the question of relationship or no relationship between the curser and the cursed would necessarily have been taken into account.

On the one hand, where a man was in no degree akin to the object of his wrath, he would have welcomed the opportunity of including his enemy's whole family in his vengeance by causing him to return and devour them. For in Greece recrimination is wholly unsparing, and no man pretending to any elegance or taste in the matter of abuse could neglect to level his taunts and threats and curses at least as much against the relatives—especially the female relatives—of his enemy as against the man himself. Just

as the tenderest blessings among the peasants are prayers, not for him to whom they wish well, but rather for those whom he has loved and lost, so that the beggar's thanks are often 'May God forgive your father and your mother' (which, however it may sound, is not intended otherwise than graciously) or again, prettier still in its vague genderless plural which no translation can adequately render, *ὁ θεὸς 'χωρέσ' τὰ πεθαμμένα σου*, 'May God forgive your dead,' so the harshest and bitterest of curses are vented, not upon the man who has excited them, but upon those who are nearest and dearest to him. And bitterness in cursing being as much a part of the Greek character as gentleness in blessing, it is almost inconceivable that, if any idea of real vampirism had originally been associated with *revenants*, the merest novice in malediction could have missed the opportunity of adding to his imprecations of incorruptibility and resuscitation a prayer that his enemy might devastate with horrid carnage the home of those who mourned him. Yet not one of the curses which I have quoted above suggests any savagery to be shown by the resuscitated body; not one of them hints at the blood-thirsty predatory character of the modern *vrykolakas*; nay, most significant of all, not one of them contains the word *vrykolakas*, nor have I ever heard or found recorded, so far as I can remember, any form of the curse in which that word appears[1]. Now this is certainly not due to any difficulty of language in using the word, for there is a convenient enough verb formed from it, *βρυκολακιάζω*, 'I turn vampire,' and *νὰ βρυκολακιάσης*, 'May you turn vampire,' should commend itself as both sonorous and compendious. The reason why all mention and all thought of the ordinary *vrykolakas* are lacking in these curses must rather be that, when they first came into vogue, *revenants* were not yet credited with the savage character which under Slavonic influence they afterwards acquired; and that, when the word *vrykolakas* was introduced, the old traditional forms of curse underwent no modification, but were bandied to and fro by boys with the same glib uniformity as by their fathers before them. They had been cast in set forms before the idea of vampirism had been introduced and when men believed only in reasonable and usually harmless *revenants*.

[1] I have been at some pains to make wide enquiries on this point, but have found no example.

On the other hand, where the curser was akin to the cursed, the nearer the tie of blood the more incomprehensible would be the attitude of one who by an imprecation should recall from the grave so malignant a thing as the modern *vrykolakas*, only to fall himself perhaps the first victim to its blood-thirstiness. If the phrase 'May the earth reject thee' had suggested anything beyond simple resuscitation, if there had been any resemblance in character between the Greek *revenant* and the Slavonic vampire, such an imprecation would have been impossible where close kinship existed; it would at once recoil with fatal force upon the curser's own head; above all, that most solemn curse, the curse of parent upon child, would have been the first to 'come home to roost'; and yet the use of such parental imprecations is both celebrated in ballad and not unknown, I am told, in actual experience. Once more then the use of these curses is explicable only on the hypothesis that the original Greek *revenants* were not the formidable monsters now known as *vrykolakes*, and that, when under Slavonic influence the popular conception of them changed, the old set phrases of commination—coins, as it were, of speech, struck in the mint of the original superstition—continued current in spite of their inconsistency with the new ideas. These colloquial survivals of the original Greek superstition are at once a proof and a measure of its later contamination. The Greeks had believed in reasonable human *revenants*; the Slavs taught them to believe in brutish inhuman vampires.

This conclusion is confirmed by the ballad to which I have just referred; in it a mother's imprecation recalls her son from the grave; the *revenant*, who is the protagonist in a most dramatic story, is, as will be seen, of the type which I claim to have been the original Greek type and exhibits no Slavonic traits.

The ballad[1], which as an important document I translate at length, runs as follows:

Mother with children richly blest, nine sons and one dear daughter,
The darling of thy heart was she, and fondly did'st thou tend her;
For full twelve years thou guardedst her, and the sun looked not on her,
But in the dusk thou bathedst her, by moonlight trim'dst her tresses,
By evening-star and morning-star her curls in order settest.
And lo! a message brought to thee, from Babylon a message,
Bidding thee wed thy child afar, afar in a strange country;

[1] The version which I translate is No. 517 in Passow's *Popularia Carmina Graec. recent.*

Eight of her brethren will it not, but Constantine doth hearken:
—'Nay, mother, send thine Areté, send her to that strange country,
That country whither I too fare, that land wherein I wander,
That I may find me comfort there, that I may find me lodging.'
—'Prudent art thou, my Constantine, yet ill-conceived thy counsel:
If there o'ertake me death, my son, if there o'ertake me sickness,
If there hap bitterness or joy, who shall go bring her to me?'
He made the Saints his witnesses, he gave her God for surety,
If peradventure there come death, if haply there come sickness,
If there hap bitterness or joy, himself would go and bring her.
Now when they had sent Areté to wed in the strange country,
There came a year of heaviness, a month of God's displeasure,
And there befell the Pestilence, that the nine brethren perished;
Lone as a willow in the plain, lone, desolate their mother.
Over eight graves she beats her breast, o'er eight makes lamentation,
But from the tomb of Constantine she tears the very grave-stones:
—'Rise, I adjure thee, Constantine, 'tis Areté I long for;
Thou madest the Saints thy witnesses, thou gavest me God for surety,
If there hap bitterness or joy, thyself would'st go and bring her.'
Forth from the mound that covered him the stern adjuring drave him;
He takes the clouds to be his steed, the stars to be his bridle,
The moon for escort on his road, and goes his way to bring her.
He leaves the mountains in his wake, he gains the heights before him,
He finds her 'neath the moonlight fair combing her golden tresses.
E'en from afar he bids her hail, cries from afar his message:
—'Up, Aretoúla, up and come, for lo! our mother needs thee.'
—'Alack, alack, dear brother mine, what chance hath then befallen?
If haply 'tis an hour of joy, let me go don my jewels,
If bitterness, speak, I will come and tarry not for robing.'
—'Up, Aretoúla, up and come, and tarry not for robing.'
Beside the way whereon they passed, beside the road they travelled,
They heard the singing of the birds, they heard the birds a-saying:
—'Who hath e'er seen a maiden fair by a dead man escorted?'
—'Didst hear, my brother Constantine, what thing the birds are saying?
"Who hath e'er seen a maiden fair by a dead man escorted?"'
—'Nay, foolish birds, let them sing on, nor heed their idle chatter.'
Anon as they went faring on, yet other birds were calling:
—'What woeful sight is this we see, so piteous and so plaintive,
That lo! as comrades on their way, the dead escort the living?'
—'Didst hear, my brother Constantine, what thing the birds are saying?
"That lo! as comrades on their way, the dead escort the living."'
—'Nay, what are birds? let them sing on, nor heed their idle chatter.'
—'Ah, but I fear thee, brother mine, thou savourest of censing.'
—'Nay, at the chapel of Saint John we gathered yester even,
And the good father hallowed us with incense beyond measure.'
And yet again as they fared on, yet other birds were crying:
—'O God, great God omnipotent, great wonders art thou working;
So gracious and so fair a maid with a dead man consorting!'
—'Didst hear, my brother Constantine, what thing the birds are saying?
Tell me, where are those locks of thine, thy trimly-set mustachio?'
—'Twas a sore sickness fell on me, nigh unto death it brought me,
And spoiled me of my golden locks, my trimly-set mustachio.'
Lo! they are come; but locked their home, the door fast barred and bolted,
And all the windows of their home in spider-webs enshrouded.
—'Op'n, prithee, open, mother mine, 'tis Areté thy daughter.'
—'An thou art Charon, go thy way, for I have no more children;
My one, my little Areté, bides far in the strange country.'

—'Op'n, prithee, open, mother mine, 'tis Constantine that calls thee;
I made the Saints my witnesses, I gave thee God for surety,
If there hap bitterness or joy, myself would go and bring her.'
Scarce had she passed to ope the door, and lo! her soul passed from her.

The versions of this ballad which have been collected are very numerous[1], and some of them differ so widely from others in language as not to have a single line in common. That which I have selected for translation is one of the most complete, presenting fairly all the essential points of the story, and free from the eccentricities which some versions have developed. At the same time it must be allowed that here the mother's curse is only implied by her action of tearing up the gravestones and adjuring Constantine to rise, whereas in one or two versions, otherwise inferior, it is clearly and forcibly expressed.

Thus in one[2] her words run:

*πέτρα νὰ γίνῃ ὁ Κωσταντής, λιθάρι νὰ μὴ λειώσῃ,*
*πῶστειλε τὴν 'Αρέτω μου, τὴν 'Αρετὼ 'στὰ ξένα.*

'May Constantine become as rock, yea even as stone, and have no loosing (i.e. dissolution), for that he sent my Areto to a strange land.'

And in another[3]:

*Ὅλοι μου οἱ γυιοὶ νὰ λυώσουνε κὴ ὁ Κώσταs νὰ μὴ λυώσῃ,*
*Ὅπ' ἔδωκε τὴν 'Αρετὴ πολὺ μακρυὰ 'στὰ ξένα.*

'May all my other sons have "loosing" and Constantine be not "loosed," for that he let my Areté be taken afar to a strange country.'

Again, another version[4] ends, not with the arrival of Areté in time to close her dying mother's eyes, but with the revoking of the curse upon Constantine in gratitude for the fulfilment of his oath:

*'νὰ σὲ λυώσῃ τὸ χῶμα σου καὶ νὰ σὲ φάγ' ἡ πλάκα σ'.'*
*ὅσο νὰ σώσ' τὸ λόγο τηs χοὔφτα χῶμα γενότον.*

'May the earth where thou liest loose thee and thy tomb consume thee.' Scarce had she finished her speech and he became but a handful of earth.

Clearly then the curse, which in this story is conceived as binding Constantine's body and driving him forth from the grave and which must be revoked before his body can be loosed by natural decay, is one of that class which we have been considering;

[1] Prof. Πολίτηs has collected seventeen in a monograph entitled Τὸ *δημοτικὸν ἄσμα περὶ τοῦ νεκροῦ ἀδελφοῦ* (originally published in the Δελτίον τῆs Ἱστορ. καὶ Ἐθνολ. Ἑταιρίαs).

[2] Πολίτηs, *op. cit.* p. 43 (Version No. 4, ll. 18, 19).

[3] The periodical Πανδώρα, 1862, vol. 13, p. 367 (Πολίτηs, *op. cit.* p. 66, no. 17, ll. 19, 20).

[4] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, Ἡ Σινασός, p. 164 (from Sinasos in Asia Minor).

but the story confers the further advantage of letting us see such a curse in operation. Constantine is presented as a *revenant*, but not of the modern type; for what turn must the story have taken if he had been a normal *vrykolakas*? His first act would have been to devour his nearest of kin—his mother, who was tearing up his grave-stones and cursing him: and his next, if he had troubled to go as far as Babylon, to make a like end of Areté. And what do we actually find? Constantine acts not only as a reasonable man in seeking to allay his sister's suspicions, but also as a good man in keeping his oath. He is driven forth from the grave on a quest which (in most versions of the story) earns him no thanks from those whom he benefits; he does his weary mission and (in most versions) goes back again to the cold grave from which the curse had raised him. Our sympathy is engaged by Constantine no less than by his mother. He too is a sufferer, first stricken down in his youth by pestilence, and then cursed because his oath remained unfulfilled. He claims our pity, and in this differs fundamentally from the ordinary *vrykolakas* which could only excite our horror.

Furthermore it is noteworthy that in the many versions of this poem, just as in the popular curses which I have quoted, the word *vrykolakas* is nowhere found[1].

Hence I am inclined to believe that the original poem, from which have come so many modern versions, differing widely in many respects, but agreeing completely in the exclusion both of the Slavonic word *vrykolakas* and of all the suggestions of horror which surround it, was composed in a period anterior to the intrusion of Slavonic ideas; and that the modern versions therefore, which prove their fidelity to the spirit of the original precisely by having refused admittance to anything Slavonic, furnish that which we are seeking, the purely and genuinely Greek element in the now composite superstition. That Greek element then is the conception of the *revenant* as a sufferer deserving even of pity, the very antithesis in character of the Slavonic vampire, an aggressor exciting only loathing and horror.

In the composite modern Greek superstition, as described in the last chapter, the Slavonic element is clearly predominant.

[1] I make this statement with as full confidence as can be felt in any such negation, after perusing nearly a score of versions.

But the conclusion to which my analysis of the superstition has now led, explains what would otherwise have been almost inexplicable, the existence of a few stories in which the *revenant*, though called *vrykolakas*, is none the less represented as harmless or even amiable.

One such case is mentioned in Father Richard's narrative[1]—the case of a shoemaker in Santorini, who having turned *vrykolakas* continued to frequent his house, mend his children's shoes, draw water at the reservoir, and cut wood for the use of his family; and though it is added that the people became frightened and exhumed and burned him, this was only a measure of precaution dictated by their experience of other *vrykolakes*; no charge was brought against this particular *revenant*. It might also be supposed that the *vrykolakes* of Amorgos, mentioned next in the same narrative, who were seen in open day five or six together in a field feeding apparently on green beans, were of the less noxious kind; but they may of course have been carnivorous also.

Another story, recently published[2], records how a native of Maina, also a shoemaker by trade, having turned *vrykolakas* issued from his grave every night except Saturday, resumed his work, and continued to live with his wife, whose pregnancy forced her to reveal the truth to her neighbours. When once this was known, many accusations, it is true, were brought against the *vrykolakas*; but the story at least recognises some domestic and human traits in his character.

But a much more remarkable tale[3] is told of a field-labourer of Samos who was so devoted to the farmer for whom he worked, that when he died he became a *vrykolakas* and continued secretly to give his services. At night he would go to the farm-buildings, take out the oxen from their stall, yoke them, and plough three acres while his master slept; in the daytime an equal piece of work was done by the master—so that incidentally the oxen were nearly killed. The neighbours however having had their suspicions aroused by the rapidity of the work, which the farmer himself could in no wise explain, kept watch one night, and having detected the *vrykolakas* opened his grave, found him, as would be expected, whole and incorrupt, and burned him.

[1] See above, p. 368.

[2] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 589.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 591.

Such stories as these testify that the old and purely Greek conception of *revenants* is not quite extinct even in places where the only name for them is the Slavonic word *vrykolakes*.

The Slavonic element in the modern superstition having been now removed, it remains to consider what was the attitude of the Church towards the Greek belief in *revenants* and what effect her teaching had upon it.

I have already pointed out that the Jesuit, Father Richard, discriminated between *vrykolakes* and certain bodies called 'drums,' which were found incorrupt after many years of burial. This distinction he had no doubt learnt from clergy of the Greek Church; for, while the common-folk held that those whom the earth did not receive and consume were necessarily ejected by her, or, in other words, that a dead man whose body did not decay was necessarily also a *revenant*, the Church distinguished, as we shall see, between belief in incorruptibility and belief in resuscitation, inculcating the former, and varying between condonation and condemnation of the latter. These two ideas must therefore be handled separately.

The incorruptibility of the body of any person bound by a curse was made a definite doctrine of the Orthodox Church. In an ecclesiastical manuscript, seen by Father Richard, were specifications of the discoloration and other unpleasant symptoms by which the precise quality of that curse—parental, episcopal, and so forth—which had arrested the decay of a corpse might be diagnosed; and in one of the forms of absolution which may be read over any corpse found in such a condition there is a clause which provides for all possible cases without requiring expert diagnosis: 'Yea, O Lord our God, let Thy great mercy and marvellous compassion prevail; and, whether this Thy servant lieth under curse of father or mother, or under his own imprecation, or did provoke one of Thy holy ministers and sustained at his hands a bond that hath not been loosed, or did incur the most grievous ban of excommunication by a bishop, and through heedlessness and sloth obtained not pardon, pardon Thou him by the hand of me Thy sinful and unworthy servant; resolve Thou his body into that from which it was made; and stablish his soul in the tabernacle of saints[1].' But the curse to which the Church naturally gave

[1] Goar, *Euchолog.* p. 685.

most prominence and attached most weight was the ban of excommunication; and therefore, consistently with the accepted doctrine, the formula of excommunication ended by sentencing the offender to remain whole and undissolved after death—a condition from which the body was not freed unless and until absolution was read over it and the decree of excommunication thereby rescinded.

This doctrine was held to have the authority of Christ's own teaching[1]. The power which was conferred upon the apostles in the words, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven[2],' was believed to have been so transmitted to their successors, the bishops[3] of the Church, that they too had the faculty of binding and loosing men's bodies—that is, of arresting or promoting their decomposition after death. Such an interpretation of the text was facilitated by the very simplicity of its wording; for λύω, in modern Greek λυόνω, 'loose,' expresses equally well the ideas of dissolution and of absolution, while δέω, in modern Greek δένω, 'bind,' embraces their respective opposites. A *nomocanon de excommunicatis*[4], promulgated in explanation of the fact that excommunication sometimes failed to produce its expected result, presents clearly the authorised doctrine and at the same time illustrates effectively the twofold usage of the words 'loosing' and 'binding.'

'Concerning excommunicated persons, the which suffer excommunication by their bishops and after death are found with their bodies "not loosed" (*ἄλυτα*).

'Certain persons have been justly, reasonably, and lawfully excommunicated by their bishops, as transgressors of the divine law, and have died in the state of excommunication without amending their ways and receiving forgiveness, and have been buried, and in a short time their bodies have been found "loosed" (*λελυμένα*) and sundered bone from bone...

'Now this is exceeding marvellous that he who hath been

[1] Cf. Leo Allatius, *De quor. Graecorum opinat.* XIII. Balsamon, I. 569 (Migne). *Epist. S. Niconis*, quoted by Balsamon, II. p. 1096 (ed. Paris, 1620). Christophorus Angelus, cap. 25.

[2] S. Matthew xviii. 18.

[3] The power of excommunicating belonged to priests as well as to bishops, but they might not exercise it without their bishop's sanction. Cf. Balsamon, I. 27 and 569 (Migne).

[4] Quoted by Leo Allatius, *De quor. Graec. opinat.* XIII. and XIV.

lawfully excommunicated should after his death be found with his body "loosed" (λελυμένος τὸ σῶμα) and the joints thereof sundered...'

This 'exceeding marvellous' occurrence was therefore submitted to the consideration of learned divines, whose verdict was to the effect that any excommunicated person whose body did not remain whole had no more hope of salvation, because he was no longer in a state to be 'loosed' and forgiven by the bishop who had excommunicated him[1], but had become already 'an inheritor of everlasting torment.'

'But,' continues the *nomocanon* formulated by these theologians, 'they that are found excommunicate, to wit, with their bodies whole and "not loosed" (ἄλυτα), these stand in need of forgiveness, in order that the body may attain unto freedom from the "bond" (δεσμόν) of excommunication. For even as the body is found "bound" (δεδεμένον) in the earth, so is the soul "bound" (δεδεμένη) and tormented in the hands of the Devil. And whensoever the body receive forgiveness and be "loosed" (λυθῇ) from excommunication, by power of God the soul likewise is freed from the hands of the Devil, and receiveth the life eternal, the light that hath no evening, and the joy ineffable.'

The whole doctrine of the physical results both of excommunication and of absolution appeared to Leo Allatius to be indisputable, and he mentions[2] several notable cases in which the truth of it was demonstrated. Athanasius, Metropolitan of Imbros, is quoted as recording how at the request of citizens of Thasos he read the absolution over several incorrupt bodies, 'and before the absolution was even finished all the corpses were dissolved into dust.' A similar case was that of a converted Turk who was subsequently excommunicated at Naples, and had been dead some years before he obtained absolution and dissolution at the hands of two Metropolitans. More remarkable still was a case in which a priest, who

[1] The reversal of the decree of excommunication by the same person who had pronounced it was always preferred, largely as a precaution against an excommunicated person obtaining absolution too easily. Cf. Balsamon, I. 64–5 and 437 (Migne).

[2] *op. cit.* cap. xv. Cf. also Christophorus Angelus, Ἐγχειρίδιον περὶ τῆς καταστάσεως τῶν σήμερον εὑρισκομένων Ἑλλήνων (Cambridge, 1619), cap. 25, where is told the story of a bishop who was excommunicated by a council of his peers, and whose body remained 'bound, like iron, for a hundred years,' when a second council of bishops at the same place pronounced absolution and immediately the body 'turned to dust.'

had pronounced a sentence of excommunication, afterwards turned Mohammedan, while the victim of his curse, though he had died in the Christian faith, remained 'bound.' The matter was reported to the Patriarch Raphael, and at his instance the Turk, though after much demur, read the absolution over the Christian's body, and towards the end of the reading, 'the swelling of the body went down, and it turned completely to dust.' The Turk thereupon embraced Christianity once more, and was put to death for doing so.

Most graphic of all is a story attributed to one Malaxus[1]. The Sultan having been informed—among other evidences of the power of Christianity—that the bodies of the excommunicated never obtained dissolution till absolution was read over them, bade seek out such an one and absolve him. The Patriarch of the time accordingly made enquiries, which resulted in his hearing of a priest's widow who had been excommunicated by a predecessor, the Patriarch Gennadius. Her story was that having been rebuked by him for prostitution she publicly charged him with an attempt to seduce her. Gennadius had answered the charge by praying aloud one Sunday in the presence of all the clergy, that, if her accusation were true, God would pardon her all her sins and give her happiness hereafter and let her body, when she died, dissolve; but, if the charge were slander and calumny against himself, then by the will and judgement of Almighty God he exercised his power of severing her from the communion of the faithful, to remain unpardoned and incorruptible. Forty days afterwards she had died of dysentery and having been buried remained incorrupt.

Exhumed at the Sultan's instance the body was found to be still sound and whole, of a dark colour and with the skin stretched like the parchment of a drum. It was then removed and kept for a certain time under the Sultan's seal, until the Patriarch decided to absolve it. As he read the absolution the crackling of the body as it broke up could be heard from within the coffin. It was

[1] According to Georgius Fehlavius, p. 539 (§ 422) of his edition of Christophorus Angelus, *De statu hodiernorum Graecorum* (Lipsiae, 1676), Emanuel Malaxus was the writer of a work entitled *Historia Patriarcharum Constantinopolitanorum*, which I have not been able to discover. It was apparently used by Crusius for his *Turco-Grecia*; for the story here told is narrated by him in two versions (I. 56 and II. 32, pp. 27 and 133 ed. Basle) and he alludes also (p. 151) to a story concerning Arsenios, Bishop of Monemvasia, which likewise according to Fehlavius (*l.c.*) was narrated by Malaxus.

then again kept for a few days under the Sultan's seal, and when finally the coffin was opened the body was found 'dissolved and decomposed, having at last obtained mercy.' And the Sultan was so impressed by the miracle that he is recorded to have exclaimed, 'Certainly the Christian religion is true beyond all question.'

Suchlike stories, together with the formula of excommunication and the *nomocanon* above quoted, prove conclusively that the Church did not merely acquiesce in one part of the popular superstition but authoritatively sanctioned it and utilised it for her own ends. The incorruptibility of the dead body under certain conditions was made an article of faith and an instrument of terrorism, which, as will appear later[1], the ill-educated peasant-priests did not scruple to wield widely as an incentive to baptism, a deterrent from apostasy, and a challenge to repentance.

The name by which ecclesiastical writers designated a person whose body was thus 'bound' by excommunication, was one which has already been explained, *τυμπανιαῖος*[2] or, in another form, *τυμπανίτης*[3]—swollen until the skin is as tight as a drum. This word, which now survives, so far as I know, only in one island, and in the seventeenth century, to judge by Leo Allatius' reference to it, was certainly less common than the word *vrykolakas*, had probably at one time, before Slavonic influence was felt, belonged to the popular as well as to the ecclesiastical vocabulary; and it was, I suspect, borrowed by the Church from popular speech at the same time as she borrowed from popular superstition the idea of dead bodies being 'bound' and withheld from corruption by a curse.

At what date this appropriation took place I cannot determine; but it must certainly have been before Slavonic influence was widely felt; for, when once the Greek *revenant* had acquired the baneful characteristics of the Slavonic vampire, the clergy would surely never have claimed as a new thing the power to 'bind' the dead by excommunication, when the laity (and indeed many of their own calling too) believed that persons so 'bound' became

[1] See below, p. 409.

[2] Christophorus Angelus (*op. cit.* cap. 25) vouches for the early use of this word by one Cassianus, whom he describes as *Ἕλλην παλαιὸς ἱστορικός*. I cannot identify this author.

[3] Du Cange, *Med. et infim. Graec.*, s.v. *τυμπανίτης*.

rampant and ravening *vrykolakes*. The belief must therefore have been incorporated in ecclesiastical doctrine at a time when the Greek people spoke of the incorrupt dead as τυμπανιαῖοι, 'drumlike,' and conceived of them as reasonable *revenants*.

The process by which the belief came to obtain the sanction of the Church is not hard to guess. The ambiguity of the words λύω, 'loose,' and δέω, 'bind,' may well have been the starting-point. If, on the one hand, the apostles, or the bishops who succeeded them, treated certain sins as 'having no forgiveness neither in this world nor the world to come,' and in the exercise of their power to bind and to loose included in their formula of excommunication some such phrase as Leo Allatius records, καὶ μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἄλυτος καὶ ἀπαράλυτος, 'and after death never to be "loosed"' (meaning thereby 'absolved'); while, on the other hand, the Greek people were hereditarily familiar with a pagan belief that the dead bodies of persons who lay under a curse were not 'loosed' (in the sense of 'dissolved'); then the common-folk for their part would necessarily have understood the ecclesiastical curse as a sentence of 'non-dissolution'; while the clergy would have been less than Greek if they had not seen, and more than Greek if they had not seized, the handle which popular superstition gave them, and by adding to their accustomed formula (μετὰ τὸν θάνατον ἄλυτος, 'after death never to be "loosed"') such apparently innocent words as ὥσπερ αἱ πέτραι καὶ τὰ σίδηρα[1], 'even as stone and iron,' substituted the idea of 'dissolution' for that of 'absolution' and definitely committed the Church to the old pagan doctrine.

If this conjecture as to the process by which the popular belief became an article of the Orthodox faith be correct, a further suggestion may be made as to the date at which the process began. If the word 'loosing' was misunderstood by the Greeks when used in the formula of excommunication, it would equally have been misunderstood in the words of Christ, 'Whatsoever ye shall bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven[2].' Was it then the knowledge that these words were commonly misinterpreted by the Greeks which led the author of the fourth Gospel to reproduce them in a less equivocal form: "Whosesoever sins ye remit, they

[1] Christophorus Angelus, *l.c.* [2] Matthew xviii. 18.

are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained[1]"? This would indicate an early date indeed. Yet the date matters little as compared with the main fact that the ecclesiastical doctrine of the incorruptibility of excommunicated persons was at some time borrowed from paganism.

The other half of the popular superstition, namely that those whose bodies were 'bound' by excommunication or otherwise, and whom the earth did not 'receive,' were ejected by her and reappeared as *revenants*, caused the Church some embarrassment. Sometimes the alleged resuscitation of such persons was condemned as a mere hallucination of timorous and superstitious minds; at other times it was accepted as a fact and explained as a work of the Devil designed to lead men astray, and acting upon this idea the clergy often lent their services to absolve and to dissolve the suspected corpse.

Leo Allatius[2] reflects both these views and shows their effect upon the conduct of the clergy. After describing the actual appearance of such bodies, which gained for them the name *τυμπανιαῖοι*, 'drumlike,' he introduces the second half of the superstition by saying that into such bodies the devil enters, and issuing from the tomb goes about working all manner of destruction; and he adds that when the body is exhumed, 'the priests recite prayers, and the body is thrown on a burning pyre; before the supplications are finished, the joints of the body gradually fall apart, and all the remains are burnt to ashes.' Yet shortly afterwards he states, 'This belief is not of fresh and recent growth in Greece; in ancient and modern times alike men of piety who have received the confessions of Christians have tried to root it out of the popular mind.' There is a clear contrast between the conduct of 'the priests' in one passage and that of the 'men of piety' in the other. The clergy did not as a body adopt a single and consistent attitude towards the popular superstition.

Similar inconsistency marks the *nomocanon* concerning *vrykolakes*, from which I have given selections along with the rest of Leo's account in the last section; these passages, for convenience of reference, are here repeated:

'Concerning a dead man, if such be found whole and incorrupt, the which they call *vrykolakas*...

[1] John xx. 23.

[2] See above, p. 365.

'It is impossible that a dead man become a *vrykolakas* save it be that the Devil, wishing to delude some that they may do things unmeet and incur the wrath of God, maketh these portents and oft-times at night *causeth men to imagine* that the dead man whom they knew before cometh and speaketh with them, and in their dreams too they see visions. Other times they see him in the road, walking or standing still, and, more than this, he even throttles men.

'Then there is a commotion and they run to the grave and dig to see the remains of the man ... and the dead man—one who has long been dead and buried—*appears to them* to have flesh and blood and nails and hair ... and they collect wood and set fire to it and burn the body and do away with it altogether ...'

Then, after denying again the reality of such things which exist *κατὰ φαντασίαν*, *in imagination only*, the *nomocanon* continues:

'But know that *when such remains be found*, the which, as we have said, is a work of the Devil, ye must summon the priests to chant an invocation of the Mother of God, ... and *to perform memorial services for the dead* with funeral meats.'

The self-contradiction of the pronouncement is exposed in the phrases which I have italicised. Clearly if such remains are found and the dead man is so affected by the work of the Devil that special services for his repose[1] are required, the theory of hallucination is untenable. But this very inconsistency of the *nomocanon*, though according to Allatius it is of uncertain authorship, proves it, as I will show, a very valuable document of the Church's traditional teaching on this matter.

S. Anastasius Sinaita, who became bishop of Antioch in 561 and died in 599, refers to *revenants* in a passage which, literally rendered, runs as follows[2]: 'Again it appears that devils, by means of false prophets who obey them and with their aid work signs and heal bodily diseases to the delusion of themselves and others, present even a dead man as risen again, and (in his person) talk with the living, in imagination (*ἐν φαντασίᾳ*). For a devil enters into the dead body of the man, and moves it, presenting

[1] The word *μνημόσυνα*, which I have rendered with verbal correctness 'memorial services,' really implies more, and corresponds to a mass for the repose of the dead.
[2] Anastasius Sinaita, in Migne's *Patrologia Gr.-Lat.*, vol. 89, 279—280.

the dead man risen again as it were in answer to the foolish prayer of the deceiver. And the evil spirit talks as it were in the person of the dead man with him whom he is deluding, telling him such things as he himself wishes to tell and answering also further questions...'

In this passage Anastasius is clearly thinking of *revenants* called up by sorcerers; in his time, when the first Slavonic invaders had only just entered Greece and anything like friendly intercourse between the two races was still a thing of the future, the conception of a real vampire was not yet known to the Greeks of Greece proper, much less to those of Antioch; and it is easy therefore to believe that the calling up of harmless *revenants* was then a recognised department of witchcraft, which afterwards lost its attractions. The particular circumstances however to which Anastasius refers are of minor importance; the interest of the passage lies in its inconsistency of thought, which results indeed in a certain confusion of language; for to say that 'it appears that devils... present even a dead man as risen again, and talk with the living in imagination,' would be not a little obscure, if the context did not throw light upon the meaning. More lucidly expressed the ideas are these: men see a dead person apparently risen from his grave and able to talk with them; the raising of the dead is the work of a devil (whose *modus operandi* is described in the second sentence); the talking is also done by the devil (as explained in the third sentence); and finally the whole thing is an hallucination.

Here then are the same contradictory doctrines as in the *nomocanon*; the resuscitation of the dead man is the work of a devil who enters into the corpse and moves it and raises it from the grave; and yet it is the 'imagination' of the men who see it which is at fault. But it can be no casual coincidence that S. Anastasius in the sixth century and a *nomocanon* which was quoted as authoritative in the seventeenth attempted to combine two incompatible doctrines concerning the re-appearance of the dead. Rather is it proof that from a very early age the Church remained halting between two opinions; and the attitude adopted towards the superstition by the clergy, some of whom, according to Leo Allatius, had long tried to root it out of the popular mind, while others rendered aid in absolving suspected corpses, naturally

varied according as they personally believed that *revenants* (including *vrykolakes*) were a figment of the people's imagination or a real work of the Devil.

Now of these two ecclesiastical views, which are really alternative and incompatible although attempts were made to combine them, the former has clearly had little or no effect upon the people; in spite of the efforts of the 'men of piety who received the confessions of Christians[1]' to extirpate the superstition, it remains vigorous, as we have seen, down to this day. But the explanation of the phenomenon as a work of the Devil was readily entertained; even educated men were convinced of it. 'It is the height of folly,' says Leo Allatius, speaking for himself, 'to deny altogether that such bodies are sometimes found incorrupt in the graves, and that by use of them the Devil, if God permit him, devises horrible plans to the hurt of the human race'; and similarly Father Richard opens his account of *vrykolakes* with the statement that the Devil sometimes works by means of dead bodies which he preserves in their entirety and re-animates. As for the common-folk, the explanation accorded so well with the diabolical characteristics of the *vrykolakas* that they could hardly have failed to accept it.

The popularisation of this view is well illustrated by a local interpretation set upon a custom which I have already discussed, the so-called custom of 'Charon's obol.' I have shown that the practice of placing a coin or other object in the mouth of the dead continues down to the present day; that the classical notion, that the coin was intended as payment for the ferryman of the Styx, was only a temporary and probably local misinterpretation of the custom; and that the coin or other object employed was really a charm designed to prevent any evil spirit from entering (or possibly the soul from re-entering) the dead body. Now in Chios and in Rhodes this original intention has not been forgotten, and is combined with the belief in *vrykolakes*. In the former island the woman who prepares the corpse for burial places on its lips a cross of wax or cotton-stuff, and the priest also during the funeral service prepares a fragment of pottery to be laid in the same

[1] i.e. the πνευματικοί, as they were called, the more discreet and 'spiritual' priests who alone were authorised by their bishops to discharge this function. Cf. Christophorus Angelus, *op. cit.* cap. 22.

place by marking on it the sign of the cross and the letters I. X. N. K. (Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς νικᾷ, 'Jesus Christ conquers'), both of them with the avowed purpose of preventing any evil spirit from entering the dead body and making of it a *vrykolakas*[1]. In Rhodes a piece of ancient pottery, inscribed with the same words but marked with the pentacle[2] instead of the cross, is placed in the mouth of the dead for the same purpose[3]. Clearly then in these two islands this ecclesiastical view has been fully accepted by the people; and what I can illustrate by customs in these cases I know to be equally true of Greece in general. Whenever an explanation is sought of the resuscitation of the dead, the answer, if any be forthcoming, lays the responsibility for it on the Devil.

This opinion, as I have said, is abundantly justified by the conduct of modern *vrykolakes*; but I am inclined to think that it was held also, by the Church at any rate, in the pre-Slavonic age when *revenants* were of a less diabolical character. The actual practice of excommunication was thought to have been instituted by St Paul[4], who twice speaks of 'delivering persons unto Satan[5].' The early ecclesiastical interpretation of this phrase is clearly given by Theodoretus[6]; commenting upon the sentence, "To deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus," he draws special attention to the fact that the body, and not the soul, is to be subjected to diabolic affliction, and then adds, 'We are taught by this, that those who are excommunicated, that is to say, severed from the body of the Church, will be assailed by the devil when he finds them void of grace.' In other words, the bodily punishment inflicted by the act of excommunication was 'possession' by the devil.

Now Theodoretus, it is true, says nothing in this passage as to the continuance of the punishment after death. But clearly if demoniacal possession was the effect of excommunication, and if also, as we have seen, the sentence of excommunication remained valid after death, it must have followed that the dead body no less

[1] Κωνστ. Καvελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, pp. 335 and 339.
[2] On this symbol see above, pp. 112 f.
[3] Newton, *Travels and Discoveries in the Levant*, I. p. 212 (1865). (Cf. B. Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 164.)
[4] Cf. Christophorus Angelus, *op. cit.* cap. 25 (init.).
[5] *I. Cor.* v. 5 and *I. Tim.* i. 20.
[6] Theodoretus, on *I. Cor.* v. 5 (Migne, *Patrologia Gr.-Lat.*, vol. 82, 261).

than the living body was possessed of the devil; and if the devil in possession of the corpse chose to agitate it and drive it out of the grave, the dead demoniac was at once a *revenant*.

There is therefore some probability that, though the Church never threatened the excommunicated with resuscitation but only with incorruptibility, she may at a very early date have offered this explanation of their alleged re-appearance; and the theory of diabolical agency may have gained popular approval from the first; for resuscitation was originally viewed by the Greek people as a calamity befalling the dead man, not as a source of danger to the living; and therefore an ecclesiastical doctrine, that it was by delivering an offender unto Satan that the curse of the Church rendered him a *revenant*, would have been felt to be a perfectly satisfactory, if novel, explanation of the process by which a known cause, imprecation, produced its known effect, resuscitation.

But, whatever the date at which the theory of diabolical possession was first developed and disseminated, the Church, and the Church only, was responsible for it. The Devil is a Christian conception, just as the vampire is Slavonic. Both must go, if the modern superstition is to be stripped of its accretions, and the genuinely Hellenic elements discovered. What then remains? Simply the belief that the bodies of certain classes of persons did not decay away in their graves but returned therefrom, and the feeling that such persons were sufferers deserving of pity. What then were the classes of persons so affected, according to the original Greek superstition?

The classes now regarded as liable to become *vrykolakes* were enumerated at the end of the last section. But both Slavonic and Christian influences have been felt here, as in the rest of the superstition. I must therefore take those classes one by one, and indicate the origin of each. None of them will require long discussion; their *provenance* is in many cases self-evident.

(1) Those who have not received the full and due rites of burial.

Here there can be no reason for supposing any alien influence; on the contrary, the high importance attached by the ancient Greeks to funeral-rites is everywhere apparent. It was these which Patroclus' spirit returned to implore; these which Antigone risked her life to give. The sin of Clytemnestra culminated in

that she 'dared to bury her husband without mourning or lamentation[1]'—an essential part of the Greek funeral; and again in historical times Lysander's honour was tarnished not so much because he put to death some prisoners of war, but because 'he did not throw earth even upon their dead bodies[2].' What effect such neglect was anciently believed to have upon the dead is a question to be considered later; but the general idea is plainly Hellenic.

(2) Those who meet with any sudden or violent death (including suicides), or, in Maina, where the vendetta is still in vogue, those who having been murdered remain unavenged.

The most important element in this class is formed by those who have been murdered, especially when, as in Maina, they are believed to return from the grave with the purpose of seeking revenge upon their murderers. Such an idea, as will be shown later, is thoroughly consonant with ancient views of bloodguilt. But it appears also from a passage of Lucian[3] that any 'violent' or 'sudden,' as opposed to 'natural,' death was commonly held to debar the victim from rest no less effectually than actual murder. The whole class may therefore be accepted as Hellenic, and may probably be considered to have always comprised all persons whose lives were cut short suddenly before their proper hour had come.

(3) Children conceived or born on one of the great Church-festivals, and children still-born.

The first division of this class may be variously explained; either the child may be supposed to suffer for the sin committed by its parents on a day when the Church enjoins continence, or else the notion, that children born between Christmas and Epiphany are subject to lycanthropy[4] and therefore also, according to Slavonic views, to vampirism, has become associated with other church-festivals also. Children still-born are probably to be numbered among victims of 'sudden' death. Thus the first division, being of ecclesiastical or Slavonic origin, is to be set aside; the second may probably be included in a larger Hellenic class already considered; neither therefore requires any further discussion.

[1] Aesch. *Choeph.*, 432–3.
[2] Paus. ix. 32. 6.
[3] *Philopseudes*, cap. 29.
[4] See above, p. 208.

(4) Those who die under a curse, especially the curse of a parent, or one self-invoked, as in the case of a man who in perjuring himself calls down on his own head all manner of damnation if what he says be false.

The dread which a curse, above all a parent's curse, excited in the ancient Greeks is well known. No one can have read Aeschylus' story of the house of Atreus, nor followed with Sophocles the fortunes of Oedipus and his children, without perceiving therein the working of a curse that claims fulfilment and cannot be averted. The idea therefore here involved is purely Hellenic.

(5) Those who die under the ban of the Church, that is to say, excommunicate.

This class is an ecclesiastical variety of the last.

(6) Those who die unbaptised or apostate.

The apostate is of course *ipso facto* excommunicate, even though no formal sentence have been pronounced against him. The unbaptised have probably been included by priestcraft for purposes of intimidation; baptism is commonly held to prevent children from becoming were-wolves, and therefore also *vrykolakes* at death.

(7) Men of evil and immoral life in general, more particularly if they have dealt in the blacker kinds of sorcery.

Clerical influence is clearly discernible here, but is not, I think, responsible for the whole idea. A story from Zacynthos[1] records how the treacherous murderer of a good man was first smitten by a thunderbolt so that he lost both his sight and his reason, and after his death was turned by God into a *vrykolakas* as a punishment for his crime, and has so remained for a thousand years. Here, in spite of the word *vrykolakas* being used, the *revenant* is represented, like Constantine in the popular ballad, as a sufferer. This idea has been shown to be pre-Slavonic—and incidentally it is not a little curious that the story itself claims to date from a thousand years ago, when this idea was only beginning to be ousted by Slavonic superstition. But if the idea of 'punishment' is old, the idea that the punishment was merited by a crime must be equally old. For this reason, and for others which will be developed later, I hold that the perpetrators of certain deadly sins were from early times regarded as accursed and subject to the

[1] Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. p. 576.

same punishment as befell those on whom a curse had actually been called down. The Church, I think, merely added to the number of those sins, and at the same time undertook the task of pronouncing in many cases the curse which they had earned.

(8) Those who have eaten the flesh of a sheep which was killed by a wolf.

This class is purely Slavonic in origin. To become a were-wolf in consequence of having eaten flesh which a wolf's fangs have infected with madness is to a simple mind rational enough; and a were-wolf becomes after death a vampire. Further the belief, so far as I know, belongs only to Elis, one of the districts where Slavonic ascendancy was most complete and continued longest.

(9) Those over whose dead bodies a cat or other animal has passed.

This class also is Slavonic. The jumping of a cat over a dead body is still believed by some Slavonic peoples to be a cause of vampirism[1], while in Greece the idea is rare and local only.

Thus out of the many conditions by which, in modern belief, a man is predisposed to turn *vrykolakas*, only three can be genuinely Hellenic: first, lack of burial; second, a sudden or violent death; and third, a parental or other curse, or such sin as renders a man accursed. The *revenant* therefore was regarded, as we inferred also from the story of Constantine and Areté, as a sufferer. His suffering might be the result of pure mischance, as in the case of sudden death, or of neglect on the part of those whose duty it was to lament and to bury him, or again of some sin of his own which had merited a curse. But whether he was the victim of sheer misfortune or of punishment, he was still a sufferer, an object to excite the pity of mankind in general, although in special cases, as when he had been murdered or had not received the last offices of love at the hands of his kinsfolk, he might reasonably be feared by those who had injured him as an avenger.

Since then in the pre-Slavonic period the general feeling towards *revenants* was a feeling of pity, the treatment of them in that period requires investigation.

Starting once more from the modern superstition, we find that the treatment of *vrykolakes* by the Greeks differs widely from that accorded by the Slavs to vampires. The Slavonic method is

[1] Ralston, *Songs of the Russian people*, p. 412.

generally to pierce the suspected corpse with a stake of aspen or whitethorn, taking care to drive it right through the heart at one blow. The usual Greek method is to burn the body. The Greeks therefore, who learnt from the Slavs all that is most horrible in their conception of *vrykolakes*, none the less thought that they knew a better way of disposing of these new-found pests than that which was practised by their teachers. Convinced by foreign influence of the danger, they relied on a native method of obviating it. They would not impale the *vrykolakas*; they would burn him. Clearly there must have been some strong conviction and assurance in the heart of a people who, freshly persuaded of the peril threatening them at the hands of so loathly and savage a monster, yet chose to pursue their own method of combating it rather than to adopt the foreign and repugnant practice of impaling the dead. That conviction plainly was that cremation, by ensuring the immediate and complete dissolution of the body, put an end to all relations of the dead with the living; and their confidence in it can only have been based upon their own experience in the treatment of the Greek species of *revenants*. Cremation then was the means by which the Greek folk had always been wont to succour those of the dead who suffered from incorruptibility and resuscitation.

Such a custom would not, so far as I can judge, have encountered any serious ecclesiastical opposition. The Church, it is true, in her earlier days had condemned cremation as a pagan rite, and with the spread of Christianity inhumation became the ordinary rite. But in the case of those who, having been buried, yet returned from the grave, since the Christian rite had proved of no avail, some concession to pagan traditions would have been natural. Many of the clergy, as we have seen, condoned cremation in the case of *vrykolakes* as a measure of self-defence; surely they would equally have allowed it as an act of charity to more innocent men to whom the earth had denied dissolution and death had brought no repose.

Thus the actual custom of burning dates from the pre-Slavonic era; it is only the motive of the act which is changed. Formerly men felt pity for the *revenant*, and sought to promote his dissolution in order to release him from a state of suffering; now, as for some centuries past, men feel only horror of the *vrykolakas*, and

seek to promote his dissolution in order to release themselves from a state of peril. Hence no doubt came the more horrible barbarities occasionally inflicted on the corpse; to tear out the heart, to boil it in vinegar, to tear the body to shreds—these are the acts of a panic-stricken and vindictive people eager to torment their foe before annihilating him. But in the old custom of cremation there was nothing inhumane; it was the merciful act of a people who had compassion upon the unquiet dead and gave to them, in solicitude for their welfare, that boon of bodily dissolution by which alone they were finally severed from the living and admitted to the world of the departed.

### § 3. Revenants in ancient Greece.

The Slavonic and the ecclesiastical elements have now been removed from the modern Greek superstition, and the Hellenic residue is briefly this: the human body sometimes remains incorruptible in the earth, and in this state is liable to resuscitation; persons so affected stand as it were halfway between the living and the dead, resembling the former when they walk the earth, and the latter when they are lying quiet in their graves or, if unburied, elsewhere; during their periods of resuscitation they act as reasonable human beings, but their whole condition is pitiable, and the most humane way of treating them is to burn their bodies; disintegration being thus secured, they return no more to this world, but are numbered among the departed. Further the causes of such a condition are threefold—lack of burial, sudden death, and execration or deadly sin deserving of it. The only question which we have left unsolved is that of the agency by which the body is resuscitated. The Devil is now held responsible; but the Devil is a Christian, not a pagan, conception.

My purpose in the present section is, first, to verify by the aid of classical literature the conclusions which have been reached, and, secondly, to solve the one problem which remains.

There is, so far as I know, only one story in ancient literature which contains anything like a full account of a *revenant*. This is related by Phlegon[1], a freedman of Hadrian; and the narrator

[1] *Mirabilia*, cap. I.

professes to have been an eye-witness of the occurrences which he describes. In his story are embodied most of those very ideas which on wholly other grounds have been argued to form the genuine Hellenic element in the modern superstition concerning *vrykolakes*, and I shall therefore reproduce it at length. Unfortunately however the beginning of the story is lost, and therewith possibly the cause assigned for the strange conduct of the resuscitated corpse which plays the heroine's part.

What remains of the story opens abruptly with a weird scene in the guest-chamber of the house of Demostratus and his wife Charito.

Their daughter Philinnion had been dead and buried somewhat less than six months, when one evening she was observed by her old nurse in the guest-chamber, where a young man named Machates was lodged, to all appearances alive. The nurse at once ran to the girl's parents and bade them come with her and see their child. Charito however was so overcome by the tidings that she first fainted and then wept hysterically for her lost daughter and finally began to abuse the old woman, calling her mad and ordering her out of the room; but the nurse expostulated with spirit, and Charito at last went with her. In the meanwhile however Philinnion and her lover had retired to rest, so that when the mother arrived she could not obtain a good view of her; but from the peep which she got of the girl's clothes and the shape of her face she thought that she recognised her daughter. Then, feeling that she could not at that hour ascertain the truth of the matter, she decided to keep quiet until morning, and then to rise betimes and surprise the girl if still there, or, failing that, to extort from Machates the whole truth.

But when dawn came the girl had gone away unobserved, and Charito began to take Machates to task, telling him the whole story and imploring him to confess the truth and to keep nothing back. The young man (who seems to have been unaware that Charito had lost a daughter named Philinnion) was much distressed, and at first would only admit that such was indeed the name of the girl whom they had seen; but afterwards he told the whole story of the girl's visits to him, mentioning that she had said that she came without her parents' knowledge. To confirm his story, he produced the gold ring which she had given him and

her breast-band which she had left behind on the previous night. These were at once recognised by Charito as having belonged to her daughter, and with a loud cry she rent her clothes and loosed her hair and threw herself upon the ground beside the tokens and began making lamentation anew. Her example was soon followed by others of the family as if in preparation for a funeral, and Machates, at his wits' end how to quiet them, promised to let them see the girl if she should come to him again.

That night accordingly they kept watch, and at the usual hour the girl came, went into Machates' room, and sat down upon the bed. The young man himself was now anxious to learn the truth; he could not wholly credit the supposition that it was a dead woman who had come so regularly, and who had eaten and drunk with him and lain at his side, and thought rather that the real Philinnion's tomb had been robbed and the booty sold to the father of the girl, whoever she might be, who visited him. No sooner therefore was she come than he quietly summoned the watchers. The girl's parents at once entered, and were for a while dumb with astonishment at the sight of her, and then threw their arms round her with loud cries. Then said Philinnion, 'O my mother and father, it was wrong of you to grudge me three days with this man here in my own home and doing no harm. And so, because of your meddlesomeness, you shall mourn for me anew, and I shall go away again to my appointed place. For it is by divine consent that I have done thus.' Scarcely had she spoken when she became a corpse and her body lay stretched upon the bed in the sight of all. Confusion and loud lamentation at once ensued, and before long the rumour had got about the town and was reported to the narrator of the story, Phlegon, who appears to have held some official position. To him at any rate it fell to keep order during the night among the excited townsfolk, and early next morning he was present at a crowded meeting in the theatre, at which it was decided to inspect first of all the family vault in which Philinnion had been laid.

The vault having been opened, on all the shelves, save that appropriated to Philinnion, were found bodies or bones; but on hers there was nothing except an iron ring belonging to Machates and a gilt cup—presents which she had received from him at her first visit. Horror-stricken the party left the vault and went

straight to Demostratus' house, and in the guest-chamber saw the girl stretched upon the floor. Thence they returned to another public assembly as crowded as the first, at which one Hyllus, who was reputed not only the best seer of the place but also a clever diviner[1] and possessed of a comprehensive knowledge of other branches of the profession, advised that the girl's body should be taken outside the boundaries of the town and should be burnt to ashes—it was inexpedient, he said, for her to be buried in the town—and that certain propitiatory rites, accompanied by a general purification, should be paid to Hermes Chthonios and the Eumenides.

The strange episode ended with the acceptance of this advice by the townspeople and the suicide of Machates.

This story was known to Father Richard of Santorini[2], who recognised in it an ancient case parallel to some which he himself had witnessed or learnt from other eye-witnesses in his own times. Even the harmless character of Philinnion did not appear to him incompatible with the popular conception of *vrykolakes*. Indeed, as we saw above, he himself mentions, among the many instances known to him, one in which a shoemaker of Santorini, having turned *vrykolakas*, manifested no vicious tendencies, but rather the greatest affection and solicitude for his wife and children.

Nor again is the incident of Philinnion's intercourse with Machates unparalleled in modern times. Many travellers and writers[3] have concurred in recording the belief that the *vrykolakas* sometimes revisits his widow, or does violence to other women in their husbands' absence, or even marries again in some place where he is unknown, and that of such unions children have been born. Indeed in the Middle Ages this belief seems to have spread even beyond the confines of Greece; for a Roman priest, early in the seventeenth century, sums up the views of his Church on the

[1] By 'seer' I render *μάντις*, a man directly inspired; by 'diviner' *οἰωνοσκόπος*, one who is skilled in the science of interpreting signs and omens.

[2] *Relation de ce qui s'est passé de plus remarquable a Sant-Erini etc.*, p. 213. He calls Philinnion a Thessalian girl, and makes Machates come from Macedonia. But his reference to the story contains a patent inaccuracy (for he speaks of the girl being buried a second time, whereas she was burnt), and in all probability he was quoting from memory, not from a more complete text than that now preserved.

[3] See Pashley, *Travels in Crete*, II. p. 221; Carnarvon, *Reminiscences of Athens and the Morea*, p. 162; Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 165; Πολίτης, Παραδόσεις, I. pp. 589, 591 and 593; Βάλληνδας, Κυθνιακά, p. 125.

subject as follows[1]: 'Devils, though incorporeal and spiritual, can take to themselves the bodies of dead men ... and in such bodies can have intercourse with women, as commonly with *striges*[2] and witches, and by such union can even beget children.' This statement would be a fair ecclesiastical summary of modern Greek belief. In Thessaly I myself was told of a family in the neighbourhood of Domoko, who reckoned a *vrykolakas* among their ancestors of the second or third generation back, and by virtue of such lineage inherited a special skill (such as is more commonly ascribed to σαββατογεννημένοι, 'men born on a Saturday,' when *vrykolakes* usually rest in their graves, or to ἀλαφροστοίχειωτοι[3], those who are in close touch with a 'familiar spirit,') in dealing with those *vrykolakes* which from time to time troubled the country-side; indeed they had been summoned, I was assured, even to remote districts for consultation as specialists.

The story of Philinnion was not overlooked by Bernhard Schmidt, but he does not appear to have recognised in it anything more relevant than in the ancient ghost-stories (*gespenstergeschichten*) among which he reckons it[4]. Most emphatically this is no ghost-story. The distinction between ghosts and Greek *revenants* is of a primary and universal nature, patent to all who can discriminate between soul and body. In this story Philinnion acts as a *revenant* and is treated as a *revenant*; the inspection of the vault in which her body had been laid and the purpose of her nocturnal visits to Machates furnish conclusive evidence of her corporeal resuscitation; and the method of disposing of her corpse is the method generally approved and employed in the case of *revenants*—cremation. In effect all that remains of the story is in complete accord with what I have claimed on other grounds as the Hellenic element in the modern superstition; only one detail is wanting—the cause of Philinnion's resuscitation—and if we had the first part of the story, it is not unlikely that in it we should find that her early death had been also sudden or violent. Clearly then the belief in *revenants* was known in Greece in the age of Hadrian.

[1] Alardus Gazaeus, *Commentary on* Ioh. Cassianus, *Collatio*, VIII. 21 (Migne, *Patrologia*, Ser. I. vol. 49).

[2] On 'striges' see above, pp. 179 ff.

[3] On this word see above, p. 288.

[4] *Das Volksleben der Neugriechen*, p. 170, with note 1.

A casual allusion to the same superstition occurs also in Lucian[1]. 'I know of a man,' says a doctor named Antigonus, 'who rose again twenty days after he was buried; I attended him after his resurrection as well as before his death.' 'But how was it,' rejoins another, 'that in twenty days the body did not decompose or in any case the man perish of hunger?' Unfortunately no answer is given and the subject drops, but the man in question was clearly a corporeal *revenant* and not a mere ghost.

A reference to the same vulgar belief is also seemingly intended by Aristophanes in the *Ecclesiazusae*, where the personal appearance of one of the reprobate old women calls forth the exclamation,

> 'Is yon an ape be-plastered with white lead,
> Or an old hag uprisen from the dead?'[2]

The passage is of course too brief to make any such allusion certain; but it becomes highly probable if it can be shown from other sources that the superstition was popularly current in Aristophanes' time. This I can do.

The fixity of popular phrases of imprecation has been amply demonstrated in the last section[3]. A large selection of curses, all conceived in the same spirit, furnished, by their contrast with some features of the now contaminated superstition, a clue for the detection of the Slavonic elements therein. These imprecations, we learnt, were based upon the purely Hellenic belief, and had remained unaffected by the foreign influence which had modified and in some respects almost transformed it. Spoken often in a moment of passion, springing spontaneously and familiarly to the lips, too hasty to be informed by conscious thought, such curses have been handed down from generation to generation as fixed expressions subject to none of the changes which come of deliberate reflection. Though the old beliefs have been altered by the infusion of alien doctrines, the old curses stand fast in bold antagonism to all foreign lore, true records of a superstition now garbled, coins stamped with the effigy and superscription of by-gone thought, but current still.

As the simplest types of these old-established curses may be taken the two phrases, *νὰ μὴν τὸν δεχτῇ ἡ γῆς*, 'May the earth

[1] *Philopseudes*, cap. 26. [2] Ar. *Eccles.*, 1072–3.
[3] See above, pp. 387–91.

not receive him,' and *νὰ τὸν βγάλῃ ἡ γῆς*, 'May the earth cast him out.' The one is negative in form, the other positive, but both equally suggest, in the peasant's mind, both the incorruptibility of the body and its resuscitation. Can a prototype of these curses be found in ancient literature? If so, in view of the general continuity of Greek belief and custom, we shall be justified in concluding that, as those ancient curses are identical with the modern, so the superstition which suggested them in old time is identical with that part of the modern superstition on which they are now based.

Two examples of these curses are furnished by Euripides. In a scene where Orestes conjures his comrade Pylades to leave him and not to involve himself in the meditated act of vengeance, the latter replies[1], 'Never may the fruitful earth receive my blood, nor yet the gleaming air, if ever I turn traitor to thee and save myself and forsake thee!' In like tone rings out Hippolytus' assertion of his innocence toward his father[2]: 'Now by Zeus the judge of oaths and by the earth beneath our feet, I swear that never have I touched thy marriage-bed, nor would have willed it nor conceived the thought. May I verily perish without glory and without name, cityless and homeless, an outcast and wanderer upon the earth, yea and in death may neither sea nor earth receive my flesh, if I have proved false!'

'May the earth not receive my flesh!' Such is the common burden of the two oaths; such the final chord struck by Hippolytus in that symphony of imprecations with which he vindicates his innocence; such too would be the strongest oath by which any peasant of to-day might bind himself. The very words have scarcely varied in a score of centuries; who then will venture to claim that their purport is changed? Is it not clear that just as in later times the Church, by incorporating the popular curse in her formula of excommunication, seized the weapons of paganism and turned them against those rebels and infidels whom her own direst fulminations had no power to dismay, so Euripides, conscious that no imaginings of his own art could suffice to excite in his hearers that horror which the climax of self-execration demanded, did not disdain 'the touchings of things common,' but turned to tragic use a popular curse which then, as now, pierced home to

[1] Eur. *Or.*, 1086. [2] Eur. *Hipp.*, 1038.

every heart? It would be strange indeed if words, which since early in the Christian era have continuously implied a belief in the indissolubility and resuscitation of those who die accursed, should be held to have borne some other meaning a few centuries earlier.

Thus then Euripides, by the identity of his language with that of to-day, discovers most conspicuously his knowledge of that which on other grounds I have shown to be the Hellenic element in the superstition concerning *vrykolakes*. But he was not alone in employing it for dramatic purposes. In the pages of Sophocles too and of Aeschylus there are passages which only a knowledge of this superstition can adequately explain. First among these is the climax of that speech in which Oedipus, blind and outcast, denounces his undutiful son:

'Begone, abhorred and renounced of me thy father, thou basest villain, and take with thee these curses that I call down upon thee, that thou win not with thy spear that land of thine own kin, nor yet return ever again to the vale of Argos, but that thou and he that drave thee forth, smiting and smitten, fall each by a brother's hand. Such is my curse; yea, and I call on Tartarus, in whose hated gloom my father lies, to drive thee from his home[1].'

The last phrase of this denunciation,

καὶ καλῶ τοῦ Ταρτάρου
στυγνὸν πατρῷον Ἔρεβος, ὥς σ' ἀποικίσῃ,

is that with which I am concerned. It is an old-established difficulty. Commentators have translated variously 'to remove thee from thy home,' 'to take thee away to his home,' 'to give thee another home'; but in effect they are all agreed in trying to make the words refer to removal from this to the nether world, or, in one word, to death. Now even if the word *ἀποικίζω* could in this context bear any of the meanings ascribed to it, such an euphemism following upon the explicit threat that Polynices should be slain by his own brother's hand would be an imbecile anticlimax; but I question the very possibility of the supposed usage. It is true that an emigrant from one place becomes an immigrant into another; but that cannot justify the interchange

[1] Soph. *O. C.*, 1383 ff.

of the two terms. Tartarus is here besought, as plainly as language can express it, to drive Polynices out, not to take him in. There can be only one explanation of that prayer. Polynices' death has already been foretold; but his father's curse pursues him beyond death. Tartarus, in whose keeping the dead should lie, is conjured to drive him forth from the home of the dead, even as the peasants now pray that the earth may cast out those whom they hate.

And the context shows clearly that the curse was so understood by Polynices. Turning to Antigone and Ismene with impassioned entreaty he implores them—them at least, though all others forsake him and turn against him—if so be his father's cruel imprecations come to fulfilment and they, his sisters, ever return to their home, not to leave him dishonoured, but to lay him in the grave and to grant him the guerdons of the dead[1]. Why then this insistence, unless the father's curse had extended beyond death? Merely to introduce a reference to the plot of the *Antigone*? Clearly more than that. Polynices was to die bound by his father's curse, slain by his brother's hand, doubly debarred, if modern beliefs be a key to ancient, from dissolution and from reception into the nether world. The words of his father's invocation of Tartarus had conveyed to his mind the certainty of a doom outlasting death, that Tartarus should not receive him, but reject him from the home of the dead. Only one faint gleam of hope was left, that by the fulfilment of those last offices of love toward the departed, which were for all men a passport to the lower world, he, burdened and bound with a father's curse, both slayer and slain of his own brother, might yet be not debarred from his last home, but free to enter into rest.

Thus Sophocles in language less popular, but hardly less clear, than that of Euripides proclaims that the belief in the non-dissolution or rejection of the body by the earth and the powers under the earth was a terror as potent then as it is now, and an ever effective weapon of malediction. Aeschylus had gone even further, and, by enlisting this terror among the threats uttered on behalf of a dead man by a god in his most holy

[1] Soph. *O. C.*, 1405.

sanctuary, had claimed as it were for the popular superstition the highest religious sanction.

In the *Choephori*[1] Orestes is made to review in a speech as difficult as it is powerful the motives which are urging him on to the requital of blood with blood. Most cogent among these motives is the explicit command issued from Apollo's Delphic shrine, bidding him not spare his father's murderess, mother though she be, and foretelling the direst penalties for disobedience. And what are these penalties? First, the physical torment of 'blains that leap upon the flesh and with savage jaws eat out its erstwhile vigour'; second, the mental horror of coming madness, 'the arrow that flieth in darkness winged by the powers of hell with the curse of fallen kindred, even raving and vain terror born of the night'; third, banishment from home and city, with no place at friendly board, no part in drink-offering and sacrifice; and yet one penalty more wherein should culminate the threatened agonies, 'to die at last with none to honour, none to love him, damned, even in the doom that wastes all, to know no corruption.'

Of the earlier penalties and of their intimate connexion with one branch of this popular superstition I shall have occasion to speak later. Here I have only to justify the new rendering which I have given to the last lines of the passage,

> *πάντων δ' ἄτιμον κἄφιλον θνήσκειν χρόνῳ*
> *κακῶς ταριχευθέντα παμφθάρτῳ μόρῳ*[2].

It has generally been held that *ταριχευθέντα* is here metaphorically used of the wasting or withering of the body through physical suffering, the first penalty, or, it may be, through mental distress, the second. In other words, the last line of the passage merely sums up in a concise expression a penalty, or penalties, previously detailed. On the same view it is but consistent to regard *πάντων ἄτιμον κἄφιλον* as a similar summary of the third penalty. Stripped of these recapitulations and vain repetitions Apollo's final threat amounts to—what? *θνήσκειν χρόνῳ*, 'to die in course of time.' A blood-curdling and unique climax of human suffering in very truth! And this a last threat after leprosy and madness and outcast loneliness? Surely rather a promise of release and rest.

[1] 261—297. [2] Aesch. *Choeph.*, 287–8.

But let the anti-climax pass. Whence comes the alleged metaphorical meaning of *ταριχεύεσθαι*, so foreign to its normal use? How comes it to denote the wasting of disease, and what authority has this supposed use? Its mainstay apparently is a single passage in a pseudo-Demosthenic speech, which, in describing the cowardly assault of a young man upon an old, depicts the aggressor as *νεαλὴς καὶ πρόσφατος* and his victim as *τεταριχευμένου καὶ πολὺν χρόνον συμπεπτωκότος*[1]. But here the metaphor, whatever may be thought of its elegance or of its likelihood to excite mirth rather than indignation, is at least clearly explained both by its antithesis and by its context; *νεαλὴς* and *πρόσφατος* are terms properly applied to 'fresh' fish or meat, *τεταριχευμένος* to the same commodities 'preserved' by drying or pickling, and we understand at once that the old man is represented to be dried and shrivelled in appearance. Such is the support for the alleged Aeschylean usage of *ταριχευθέντα* without the same antithesis to illuminate its meaning. Are we then to understand that all the fulminations and thunderings of Apollo's oracle dwindle away into an appeal to Orestes' pride in his personal appearance and a warning that leprosy will render him as unattractive as a bloater? Or, if it be claimed that the slow painful process of wasting is suggested rather than its ultimate effect, is it reasonable that a word which properly denotes artificial preservation should be used metaphorically of natural decay? This is not metaphor, but metamorphosis.

Let us then abandon far-fetched explanations; let us conceive it possible that Aeschylus used the word in the sense which it normally bore in relation to the human body—'preserved from corruption,' like the mummies of Egypt—and further that he placed the word *παμφθάρτῳ* in immediate juxtaposition with it in order to emphasise the more strikingly the contrast between the threatened 'non-corruption' and the ordinary 'wasting' powers of death. So understood, the final penalty presents a true climax. As the victim is to be excluded in his lifetime from all intercourse with the living, so in his death, by the withholding of that dissolution without which there is no entrance to the lower world, he is to be cut off from communion with the dead. He is to die

[1] Κατὰ Ἀριστογείτονος, I. p. 788. *συμπεπτωκότος* is a necessary correction of the *ἐμπεπτωκότος* of the MSS.

with none to honour him with the rites due to the dead, none to love him and shed the tears that are their just meed, but even in that last doom which consumes all others is damned to be withheld from corruption. As 'Euripides the human' uses the common phrase of to-day 'May the earth not receive,' so Aeschylus the divine anticipates the ecclesiastical formula, 'and after death thou shalt be indissoluble.'

The same contrast between the all-wasting functions of death and the 'bound' condition of the damned now becomes intelligible in two other passages of Aeschylus.

In the *Supplices* the king of the Pelasgians, who is beset by the daughters of Danaus with the twofold claim of kinsfolk and suppliants, and besought to deliver them from the lust and violence of their pursuers, acknowledges himself in a sore strait. If he rescue his suppliants, he may involve his people in war; if he refuse to hearken, he fears that, as a tacit accomplice in the violence and pollution[1] threatened, he may make to himself 'the God of all destruction a stern Avenger ever present, an Avenger that sets not free the dead even in Hades' home[2].'

Again in the *Eumenides*, when Orestes having slain his mother is no longer seeking for vengeance but flying therefrom with no hope of safety save in the promises of Apollo whose will he has done, the band of pursuing Furies, like to be presently thwarted by that god, yet comfort their black hearts with the assurance of future retribution. 'Yea,' cries one, 'me doth Apollo vex, but Orestes shall he not redeem; though he flee from me beneath the earth, there is no freeing for him, but because of his blood-guiltiness he shall find another in my stead to visit his pollution on his head[3].'

The conception of future punishment in these two passages is clearly the same. What then is meant by the fear that even the dead may not be set free? and who is 'the God of all destruction' who is named in the first passage as the author of that punishment? The answer has already been found. 'The all-destroying God' (ὁ πανώλεθρος θεὸς) is none other than the 'all-wasting doom' (πάμφθαρτος μόρος) of Apollo's oracle—Death personified instead of death abstract; and Death's refusal 'to set

[1] Cf. l. 366 μιαίνεται. [2] Aesch. *Suppl.*, 407 ff.
[3] Aesch. *Eum.*, 173 ff. reading ἄλλον μιάστορ' ἐξ ἐμοῦ.

free' the dead is to be interpreted in the light of Apollo's warning to Orestes that, if he fail in his duty to his murdered sire, he will himself in death be 'damned to incorruption.' The language employed is indeed vaguer and more allusive; the word ἐλευθεροῦν, 'to set free,' might suggest many ideas besides bodily 'freeing' or dissolution; yet it may be noticed that this is the very word which the above-quoted[1] *nomocanon de excommunicatis* uses interchangeably with the more common λύειν in this very sense. Only for us, who have not in our hearts the same faiths and fears quick to vibrate in response to each touch of religious awe, is a commentary needed; for a Greek audience the suggestion contained in ἐλευθεροῦν, above all in its implied contrast with πανώλεθρος, fully sufficed.

Thus then we have found two passages of Euripides containing imprecations almost identical in form with the curses that may be heard from the lips of modern Greek peasants; we have found a similar passage in Sophocles which has hitherto proved a difficulty to commentators simply because they have tried to pervert the meaning of the word ἀποικίζω, when its normal sense will make the phrase a parallel to those of Euripides and of modern Greece; and finally in the *Choephori* of Aeschylus—here again by reading a word in its proper sense—we have found religious sanction claimed for the belief which underlies these imprecations—the belief that the fate to be most dreaded by mankind after death is incorruptibility and resuscitation.

It remains to examine the supposed causes of this dreaded fate, and to see whether the three causes which, when we discussed the modern classes of men liable to become *vrykolakes*, appeared to be Hellenic—namely, lack of burial, violent death, and parental or other execration or any sin deserving it—actually figure as causes in ancient Greek literature.

It will be convenient to consider the last-mentioned first.

An instance of formal execration has already been provided. No better example than the curse called down by Oedipus upon his son could be desired. But it was suggested above that in certain other cases, even where no actual imprecation had been uttered, men were accounted accursed; and indeed it would be an absurdity that a son who acted undutifully towards his father

[1] See above, p. 398.

should fall a victim to his curse, but that one, let us say, who slew his father and gave him no time to pronounce the damning words, should go scatheless. From the earliest times, I believe, there were held to be certain deadly sins, sins against the few primitive god-given principles of right and wrong, which brought their own curse. Among these was numbered from the first the murder of a kinsman. To this Hesiod[1] adds others which were so regarded in his day. 'Equal is the guilt when one ill treateth the suppliant and the stranger, or goeth up unto his brother's bed,...or sinneth against orphan children and heedeth not, or chideth his old father, who hath passed the gloomy gates of age, and raileth upon him with hard words; against such an one verily Zeus himself is wroth, and at the end layeth upon him stern retribution for his unrighteous deeds.' A more civilised age included all murder in the list; and later again the Church seems to have extended it until 'transgressors of the divine law' might become *ipso facto* excommunicate and accursed.

To Aeschylus the chief of such sins was unquestionably the murder of a close kinsman; but other sins also, especially those involving pollution (*μίασμα*), rendered the perpetrator liable to the same punishment as followed upon a formal imprecation. And this view was not of Aeschylus' own invention; it must have belonged to the popular religion. Otherwise it would be impossible to explain how the Greek Church in the Middle Ages had come to adopt almost the same views as Aeschylus. For what said the Church? The *nomocanon* quoted in the last section[2] teaches that persons who 'have been justly, reasonably, and lawfully excommunicated by their bishops, as transgressors of the divine law, and have died in the state of excommunication, without amending their ways and receiving forgiveness,' may be expected to remain whole and incorrupt after death. But another ecclesiastical document[3] shows clearly that a formal sentence of excommunication was not essential to this result; a distinction is drawn between him whose corpse appears white, showing that he was 'excommunicated by the divine laws,' and him whose corpse is black, showing that he was 'excommunicated by a bishop.' Clearly then the Church taught that certain

[1] *Works and Days*, 325 ff.

[2] See above, p. 397.

[3] See above, p. 370.

'transgressors of the divine law' might become automatically excommunicate. Certain deadly sins deserved the ecclesiastical curse and, whether it were pronounced or not, incurred the same punishment after death. The list of such sins was certainly extended by the Church so as to include, for example, apostasy, omission of baptism, the more reprehensible acts of sorcery, and suicide, which was, and still is sometimes, a bar to Christian burial. But at the same time the number of those sins which were actually left to work out their own curse was probably diminished; the Church constituted herself judge, and in most cases formally sentenced the sinner to that punishment which the sin alone, without her condemnation, was popularly believed to entail. If then we strip this doctrine of its ecclesiastical dress and put out of sight the intervention of an hierarchy arrogating to itself the office of binding and loosing, there remains the simple belief that certain transgressors of the divine law, certain sinners of deadly sins, were *ipso facto* accursed and condemned to incorruption.

Is not this precisely the Aeschylean doctrine? Pelasgus, if he should consent unto the violence of those suitors who sought the daughters of Danaus in unhallowed wedlock, if he should defy Zeus the God of suppliants and set at naught those other deities at whose altar his kinswomen sat—would not he indeed be a transgressor of the divine law? He acknowledges it himself, and, conformably to the doctrine enunciated, anticipates that Death himself will turn Avenger and free him not when dead. Orestes, owing to his murdered father the sacred duty of vengeance and expressly urged by Apollo to perform it—would not he too be a transgressor of the divine law, if he should fail or flag in his enterprise of blood? Fitly then did Apollo threaten him that after manifold troubles in life he should die damned to incorruption. The same Orestes, viewed now not from Apollo's standpoint but from that of the Erinyes, bloodguilty with his mother's murder—had he not perpetrated a deadly sin, was he not a transgressor of the divine law? Rightly then may his foes exult that he shall not escape, but, though he be fled from them beneath the earth, still 'hath he no freeing.' In fine, Aeschylus agrees, save for the mediaeval multiplication of deadly sins, with the doctrine of the Church; and this agreement is proof that in the popular creed of

Greece, from which both Aeschylus and the Church must have borrowed, the commission of certain sins has always involved the penalty of incorruptibility, whether the curse which those sins merited had been formally pronounced or no. The actual source and operation of such unspoken curses will be considered in the next section.

The other two causes, lack of burial and violent death, may be considered together; for the whole trend of ancient literature in regard to both these calamities is the same, namely, that they caused the return of the dead man's spirit—of his spirit only, be it noted, and not of his body. It is the ghost of Patroclus which in the *Iliad*[1] appears to Achilles and demands the funeral-rites due to his body; it is the ghost of Elpenor which in the *Odyssey*[2] makes the same claim upon Odysseus; it is the ghost of Polydorus which in the *Hecuba*[3] of Euripides bemoans his body cast away in the sea. Again it is the ghost of Clytemnestra which in the *Eumenides*[4] of Aeschylus comes seeking vengeance for her violent death; and Lucian in the *Philopseudes*[5] gives special prominence to this cause of the soul's unrest. 'Perhaps, Eucrates,' says one of the speakers in the dialogue, 'what Tychiades means is this, that the only souls which wander about are those of men who met with a violent death—anyone, for example, who hanged himself, or was beheaded or impaled, or departed this life in any other such way—but that the souls of those who died a natural death do not wander; if that is his theory, it cannot be lightly dismissed.' It is needless to multiply examples[6]; literary tradition, from Homer down to Lucian, is all in favour of the re-appearance of the soul, and not of the body, as the result of either lack of burial or violent death.

It is perfectly clear then that there is a considerable discrepancy between the ancient literary view and the modern popular creed. Ancient literature is extremely reticent on the subject of bodily resuscitation occasioned solely by a violent

[1] Hom. *Il.* XXIII. 69 ff. [2] Hom. *Od.* XI. 51 ff.

[3] Eur. *Hec.* 1—58.

[4] Aesch. *Eum.* 94 ff. It must be observed, however, that Clytemnestra's restlessness is represented as being due to her being a murderess quite as much as to her having been violently slain. There was a double cause. See below, p. 474.

[5] cap. 29.

[6] Other references are given by Schmidt, *das Volksleben*, p. 169, among them Servius on Virg. *Aen.*, IV. 386 and Heliod. *Aethiop.*, II. 5.

death[1] or by lack of burial. In Phlegon's story it is indeed probable that the cause of Philinnion's re-appearance was a violent death; but the first part of the narrative is missing, and no such statement is actually made.

In modern beliefs, on the contrary, there is little or no trace of the idea that the dead return for these causes in purely spiritual form. The very conception of ghosts is weak and indefinite among the peasantry. I have certainly been told by peasants of cases in which a person at the point of death has appeared, presumably in spiritual form, to friends at a distance; and there is a fairly common belief, seemingly derived from the Bible, that at Easter many of the graves are opened and release for a time the spirits of the dead. But it is a significant fact that there is not even a name for ghosts which cannot be equally well applied to any supernatural apparitions. The thought of them in general seems to be nothing more definite than a vague uneasiness in the minds of timid women and children at that hour when

> 'a faint erroneous ray,
> Glanced from the imperfect surfaces of things,
> Flings half an image on the straining eye.'

There is no fixed creed or tradition here. In an account of the definite superstitions of modern Greece ghosts are a *quantité négligeable.*

But, while ancient literature and modern superstition are thus in direct conflict on one point, they are agreed in making lack of burial and violent death the causes of a certain unrest on the part of the dead; and though the one usually attributes that unrest to the ghost, and the other to the corpse, their agreement in all else could not surely be a mere casual coincidence; there must be a connexion to be discovered between them.

The consistency of the popular view which has obtained practically throughout the Christian era has already been established. The Church found the Greek people already firmly convinced that the two causes which we are considering, no less than formal execration or execrable sin, led to bodily incorruption and resuscitation. The only moot point is what agency was held to produce the resuscitation before the Church taught that it was the work of the Devil. But can equal consistency be claimed

[1] Certain hints however are to be found, on which see below, pp. 438–9.

for ancient literature? It has just now been shown that the tragedians recognised that a curse or a deadly sin led to the resuscitation of the body; and yet they make lack of burial and violent death lead rather to the re-appearance of a ghost. Why then this discrimination between the effects produced by causes all of which in more recent popular belief produce the same effect? My answer is that popular belief in antiquity was the same as popular belief now in respect of all the causes, but that literary propriety forbade more than a mere verbal reference to so gross a superstition as bodily resuscitation. When a dead man was required in literature to re-appear, he was conventionally pourtrayed as a ghost, not as a walking corpse; and the convention was, I think, right and necessary.

For let it be granted for a moment that the popular belief of to-day dates from the earliest times, and that then as now the *revenant* was popularly pictured as a monster 'swollen and distended all over so that the joints can scarcely be bent; the skin being stretched like the parchment of a drum, and when struck giving out the same sound.' Could even Homer have re-animated the dead Patroclus, with this unearthly ghastliness added to his wounds and to his mangling by the chariot, and have brought him to Achilles in the darkness of the night, without exciting in his breast horror instead of pity and loathing for love? Euripides again was greatly daring when he assigned the prologue of a tragedy to Polydorus' ghost; but even he could not have restrained the unquenchable mirth of his audience, if his play had opened with a soliloquy by an agitated corpse. Epic and dramatic propriety must have demanded some refinement of so grossly material a conception. The canons of drama, we know, would not allow the enactment of a murder on the stage before the eyes of the spectators; would it then have been compatible with the restraint of Greek art to represent the murdered body as a *revenant*? Aeschylus himself, the lover of weird misbegotten shapes, would have recoiled from such an enterprise. But those same canons did permit a verbal description of the murder; and similarly the tragedians permitted themselves to refer, in imprecations and suchlike, to the horror of bodily resuscitation.

The case then stands thus. References are, as we have seen, made by the tragedians to the possibility of men becoming *reve-*

*nants*, whereas they shrank from presenting the actuality. But the references to the possibility occur, chiefly at any rate, in imprecations, with the result that at first sight a curse would seem to have been the only recognised cause of bodily resuscitation in ancient times; whereas the most famous literary examples of the actual re-appearance of the dead—Clytemnestra and Polydorus in tragedy, or, if we go back to Homer, Patroclus and Elpenor—happen to be cases in which the cause was lack of burial or a violent death, with the result that literary tradition inclined to substitute ghosts for the corporeal *revenants* of the popular creed in these two cases.

Such is my explanation of the discrepancy; and the probability of it is warranted by three considerations—first, that Greek Tragedy does contain one or two references to the possible resuscitation of other than the accursed—second, that Plato modifies the popular notions concerning the accursed in almost the same way that the tragedians modified the fate of the unburied and of those slain by violence—third, that the literary tradition concerning ghosts is in itself inconsistent and bears the marks of arbitrary modification.

The most important reference in Tragedy occurs in the *Choephori*, where Orestes and Electra pray their murdered father to rise from the grave in bodily form[1]. This passage, together with a close parallel from Sophocles, will be fully discussed later[2]. Here I need only point out the justification by Aeschylus of my theory that the substitution of ghost for *revenant* is a necessary literary convention. He suggests verbally the possible uprising of the murdered Agamemnon as a *revenant*; but, when it comes to an actual presentation of the murdered Clytemnestra on the stage, his *dramatis persona* is a ghost.

Next, Plato, in a well-known passage of the *Phaedo*[3], speaks of the souls of dead men having actually been seen in the form of shadowy apparitions haunting the neighbourhood of tombs—souls, he explains, which have not been fully cleansed and freed from the visible material world, but still have some part therein and hence are themselves visible; and, he adds, these are the souls of the wicked, which are compelled to wander thus in punishment for their former evil life. Naturally Plato of all men—and of all

[1] Aesch. *Choeph.* 480 ff.
[2] See below, pp. 438–9.
[3] p. 81 C, D.

his works in the *Phaedo*—could not accept the notion that the body under any conditions remained incorruptible; his whole doctrine is imbued with his belief that the gross and material perishes, and only the pure and spiritual endures. When therefore he came to utilise the popular doctrine, which the tragedians had endorsed, that certain sinners were condemned to incorruption, some modification of the idea was necessary; and accordingly he makes the wicked to wander as ghosts, not as corporeal *revenants*, just as Homer and the tragedians seem to have done in the case of the unburied and those who had met their death by violence. Plato's extension of the literary tradition suggests that its earlier development had been such as I have indicated.

Lastly, the literary tradition, as represented by earlier writers than Plato, is by no means uniform. If it had been a definite religious doctrine, and not merely a literary convention, that the unburied returned as ghosts, the presentment of Patroclus and of Polydorus should have been in all respects similar. But what do we find? Each certainly appears as a ghost and asks for burial; but there the resemblance ends. According to Homer[1] the spirit of Patroclus, in craving burial of his body, declares that, ere that rite be performed, the spirit itself cannot pass the gates of Hades but is held aloof by the spirits of the other dead, and moreover that having once passed it can no more return to this world. According to Euripides[2], familiar though he must have been with Homer's teaching, the spirit of Polydorus had passed within the gates of Hades and by permission of the nether gods had returned to demand the burial of his body. Homer's reason for the soul's anxiety about the body's burial is none too convincing in itself; for it only raises a further question: if death means the final separation of soul from body, and the lower world is tenanted by souls only—for so Homer at any rate teaches—why should the denizens of that world make the admission of a newly-sped soul conditional upon the burial of the body which it had finally quitted? But, what is more important, Homer's reason, such as it is, is flatly disavowed by Euripides, who yet advances no reason of his own why the spirit of Polydorus, having once passed into Hades' halls, should have any further interest in its old carnal

[1] *Iliad* xxiii. 65 ff. [2] Eurip. *Hecuba* 1 ff.

tenement. This disagreement can only mean that Homer and Euripides were not following an acknowledged doctrine of popular religion in representing Patroclus and Polydorus in the form of ghosts; for in that case they would surely have agreed with the popular doctrine, and therefore also with each other, in assigning a reason for the ghost's interest in the burial of its discarded body. Either then there was no popular belief on the whole subject—which is incredible—or else it was such as literary propriety forbade them to follow. Now if the popular belief was that the unburied appeared as corporeal *revenants*, their eagerness for burial is intelligible; but if a ghost be substituted by literary convention for the *revenant*, a good reason for such eagerness becomes hard to find. Hence the inconsequence of Homer's reason; hence the silence of Euripides.

But if, as now seems likely, the substitution of mere ghost for bodily *revenant* was a literary convention, it by no means follows that that convention is valueless as a guide to the popular beliefs of the time. It may represent a part of those beliefs, though not the whole. The established doctrines on this whole subject were not remodelled by the tragedians save in obedience to the laws of their art. This we definitely know; for the causes which they assign for the unrest of the dead are numbered among the popularly received causes which remain to this day; and even the idea of physical resuscitation was retained and effectively utilised by them within certain limitations. Clearly then they kept what they could, and only changed what they must. Judicious selection rather than arbitrary invention was the method by which the literary tradition was established. Since then that tradition uniformly speaks of the soul's return, while discrepancies only arise in accounting for the soul's interest in the corpse, was it perhaps only in the latter respect that literary tradition parted company with popular belief? Did the spirit as well as the body of the dead play some part in the popular superstition? Did the common-folk too hold that, after the separation of soul from body at death, the soul itself under certain conditions returned from its flight towards the house of Hades—returned however not to appear alone in ghostly guise, but to re-animate the dead body and raise it up as a *revenant*? Was this the popular doctrine from which literature selected, recording the soul's return, but suppressing the

re-animation of the body, and thereby creating for itself the difficulty of explaining the soul's interest in the body?

The hypothesis commends itself as providing at the same time an answer to the one question which remained unanswered in the last section. We saw that, through ecclesiastical influence, Christian Greece has long assigned the work of resuscitating the dead to the Devil. But to whom or to what did pagan Greece previously assign it? Surely in the whole range of Greek mythology it were hard to find any supernatural being either specially suited or probably condemned to such a task. The soul is, *prima facie*, the most appropriate and likely agent.

But there is even stronger evidence than this. The probable becomes proven when we turn back to the only full pagan account of a bodily *revenant*, the story of Philinnion. What are her words, when she is discovered by her parents? 'Mother and father, it was wrong of you to grudge me three days with this man here in my own home and doing no harm. And so, because of your meddlesomeness, you shall mourn for me anew, and I shall go away to my appointed place. For it is by divine consent that I have done thus.' And how is her threat of going away fulfilled? 'Scarce had she spoken when she became a corpse, and her body lay stretched upon the bed in the sight of all.' The words 'I shall go away' were therefore intended by the writer to mean 'My soul will go away'; for the body remained. Clearly then, in the belief of that age, resuscitation of the dead meant the re-animation of the body by the soul which had been temporarily separated from it.

In the light of this fact Plato's reference to the wandering of the souls of the wicked is found to approximate more nearly to the popular superstition. Such souls, he says, have been seen in the neighbourhood of tombs; and they are visible because they are not cleansed and freed from the visible and material world[1], but participate therein. What then is the particular material thing in which they participate and which keeps them near the tombs? Evidently the body whose impurities they contracted in life, the body from which they are not cleansed and freed. Plato admits only participation, not re-animation; but in all else he adheres to the genuine popular belief.

[1] τοῦ ὁρατοῦ as opposed to τοῦ ἀειδοῦς τε καὶ Ἅιδου.

The same idea furnishes also what I believe to be the true explanation of the custom of the so-called 'Charon's obol.' The coin or other object placed in the mouth of the dead was originally, I have argued[1], a charm to prevent the entry of some evil spirit or the re-entry of the soul into the corpse. In Chios and in Rhodes, as we have seen, this is the popular explanation still given—the particular spirit against whom the precaution is taken being, owing to Christian influence, a devil. But if, as is likely, a devil has merely been substituted for the soul, while the rest of the superstition has remained unchanged, it follows that the precaution was originally directed against the return of the soul, and so was a means of ensuring bodily dissolution; for, though I cannot actually prove it, it is natural to suppose that re-animation was not the result, but the cause, of incorruption.

To sum up, the conclusions which have been reached stand thus:—Death, according to the popular religion of ancient Greece, was not a final separation of body and soul; in certain cases the body remained incorrupt and the soul re-animated it. This condition, in which the dead belonged neither to this nor to the nether world, was one of misery; and bodily dissolution was to be desired. Dissolution could in no case be properly effected without the rite of interment or cremation. The unburied therefore formed one class of *revenants*. But even due interment did not necessarily produce dissolution; a sudden or violent death rendered the body incorruptible, presumably because the proper hour had not yet come for the soul to leave it; an imprecation withheld the body from decay by its own 'binding' power; and finally, the commission of a deadly sin, above all of murder, rendered the sinner subject to the same dire fate as if the curse which his sin merited had actually been pronounced. The only unfailing method of dissolution was cremation.

### § 4. Revenants as Avengers of Blood.

The conclusions which have now been reached show, among others, the somewhat surprising result, that the popular religion of Greece both ancient and modern has always comprised the belief that both the murdered and the murderer were doomed to

[1] See above, pp. 110 ff.

the same unhappy lot after death. The murderer, in the class of men polluted and accursed by heinous sin, and his victim, in the class of those who have met with violent deaths, have alike been regarded as pre-disposed to become *revenants*. The two facts thus simply stated constitute a problem which deserves investigation. It can be no accident that two classes of men, so glaringly contrasted here, should be believed to share the same fate hereafter. Some relation between the two beliefs must surely subsist.

The solution to which the mind naturally leaps is the idea that in some way retributive justice causes the murderer to be punished with the selfsame suffering as he has brought upon his victim; that, as blood calls for blood, so the resuscitation of the murdered calls for the resuscitation of the murderer; that the old law, *δράσαντι παθεῖν*, 'as a man hath wrought, so must he suffer,' is not limited to this world nor fully vindicated by the mere shedding of the murderer's blood, but dooms him to become, like his victim, a *revenant* from the grave.

Such an explanation of the two facts before us is, it may almost be said, obviously and self-evidently right, so far as it goes; but the proof of its correctness is best to be obtained by going further, so as not merely to indicate the appropriateness of the murderer's punishment, but to discover also the agency whereby it is inflicted; for, if it can be established that according to the popular belief it is the murdered man himself who, in the form of a *revenant*, plagues his murderer, then the retributive character of all the murderer's sufferings both here and hereafter will be manifest.

The most striking testimony to the existence of such a belief is to be found in a gruesome practice to which, we are told, murderers in old time were addicted—the practice of mutilating (*μασχαλίζειν*) the murdered man by cutting off his hands and feet, and either placing them under his armpits or tying them with a band (*μασχαλιστήρ*) round his breast. What object was had in view in so disposing of the severed extremities, if indeed our information as to the act itself be correct, remains uncertain; perhaps indeed that information amounts to nothing more than a faulty conjectural interpretation of the word *μασχαλίζειν* itself, which might equally well mean to sever the arms from the body at the armpit and to treat the lower limbs in similar fashion. But at any rate the intention of the whole act

of mutilation is known and clear; the murderer sought to deprive his victim of the power to exact vengeance for his wrongs. Clearly then the vengeance apprehended was not that of a disembodied spirit entreating the gods to act on its behalf or appearing in visions to its surviving kinsfolk and urging them to requite the murderer, but the vengeance of a bodily *revenant* with feet swift to pursue and hands strong to strike. On no other grounds is the mutilation of the dead body intelligible.

But if any doubt could still rest upon this interpretation of the old custom, it must be finally dispersed by a consideration of the one instance of the same custom known to me in modern times. This occurs in a story which I have already related[1]—the story of a human sacrifice in Santorini at the time of the Greek War of Independence, as narrated to me by an old man of the island who claimed to have himself taken part in the affair. According to his narrative not only the head of the victim was cut off but also his hands, and in that order. Why then this mutilation of the dead body? That question I put in vain to the old man; he had obliged me by giving me his reminiscences, but he had no intention of letting himself be cross-questioned upon them. Yet the real answer is not hard to conjecture. Santorini is the most famous haunt of *vrykolakes* in the whole of Greece, and familiarity with them has bred in the minds of the islanders no contempt for them, but rather a more lively terror. Nowhere therefore is any expedient for combating the powers of the *vrykolakas* more likely to be remembered and adopted. Since then the human victim in the story is not represented as a willing victim, but was evidently seized and slain by violence, his slayers, in performing their task, must have recognised that he would in all probability turn *vrykolakas*, and in their mutilation of his corpse (a deed inexpressibly repugnant to Greek feeling now as in old time) can only have been actuated by the hope of thus incapacitating the *revenant* for his otherwise sure and terrible vengeance.

The reason then why the murderer as well as the murdered becomes a *revenant* is plain. The victim, rising from his grave in bodily substance, pursues his enemy with untiring rancour until he brings him to the same sorry state as that to which he himself has come.

[1] See above, p. 340.

Such, I venture to say, has been the conviction deep down in the hearts of the Greek people from the earliest times down to this day. A custom, which consists in a deliberate and sacrilegious act of mutilation, more ghastly than murder itself, perpetrated upon the helpless dead, and which yet has continued unchanged throughout the changes and chances which the Greek people have undergone for more than a score of centuries, can only be based upon the most immutable of superstitious beliefs and dreads, and reveals more unerringly than even the whole literature of Greece the fundamental ideas of the Greek people concerning the avenging of blood. The murdered man in bodily shape avenges his own wrongs.

But while the existence of this belief is thus established by the best evidence of all, namely the fact that men have continued to act upon it, the views of ancient writers on the subject of blood-guilt are not on that account to be neglected; on the contrary, the whole literature bearing thereupon, and above all the story of the house of Atreus as told by Aeschylus, much as they have been studied, deserve fresh consideration just for the very reason that our judgement of them must be modified by this new fact. Starting with the knowledge of the part which the murdered man himself played according to popular belief in securing the punishment of his murderer, we are enabled more fully to appreciate the genius of Aeschylus in so handling a superstition which, like other things primitive in Greek religion, was still venerated by an age which could discern its grossness, that, without either losing the religious sympathies of his audience by too wide a departure from venerable traditions, or offending their artistic taste by too close an adherence to primitive crudities, he wrought out of that material the fabric of the greatest of tragedies.

What we shall find in thus studying anew some of the literature of the subject is a modification of the grosser elements in the popular superstition such as the last section has already prepared us to expect. We saw there how restricted was the use which the tragedians and others dared to make of the popular belief in corporeal *revenants* of any kind; we saw that dramatic propriety absolutely forbade the introduction of a dead man to play a part otherwise than in the form of a ghost; and yet more than once we found, especially as the climax of some impreca-

tion, a verbal allusion to the belief in incorruptibility and bodily resuscitation. And now similarly we shall see that the tragedians allowed themselves no greater license in dealing with *revenants* in quest of vengeance than in dealing with the more innocuous sort; we shall see that dramatic propriety forced them to find some other agency than that of the bodily *revenant* whereby the vengeance of Agamemnon upon Clytemnestra, and of Clytemnestra upon Orestes, might be executed; but we shall find withal that here again there are a few verbal references to the uprising of the dead themselves as avengers of their own wrongs, and moreover that, though in the actual development of the plot they can have no part save only that of a ghost, and some other avenger is made to act on their behalf, yet it is they themselves who instigate and urge him to his task. The bodily activity of the murdered man is suppressed, save for some few hints, as a thing too gross for representation by tragic art; but at the same time fidelity to old religious tradition is in a way maintained by proclaiming his personal, though ghostly, activity in inciting and even compelling others to avenge him.

The clearest references to the bodily activity of the murdered man occur in precisely the same connexion in both Aeschylus and Sophocles—in a prayer offered by Agamemnon's children at their dead father's tomb. In Sophocles the occasion is that scene in which Electra rebukes her sister for bearing Clytemnestra's peace-offerings to Agamemnon's tomb—peace-offerings, be it noted, which in themselves imply that the dead man is still a powerful foe to his murderess—and bids her instead thereof join with Electra herself in laying a lock of hair upon the tomb; and then come the notable lines,

> αἰτοῦ δὲ προσπίτνουσα, γῆθεν εὐμενῆ
> ἡμῖν ἀρωγὸν αὐτὸν εἰς ἐχθροὺς μολεῖν[1],

'and falling at his tomb beseech thou him to come from out the earth in his own strength a kindly helper unto us against his foes.' No one, I suppose, can misdoubt the emphasis which falls on *αὐτὸν*, 'his very self'; and to the Greek mind the 'very self' was not a disembodied spirit, but a thing of flesh and bones and solid substance. Unless Sophocles was hinting verbally at that which

[1] Soph. *El.* 453–4.

he durst not represent dramatically—the resurrection of the dead man in bodily substance as an avenger of his own wrongs—the word could have had no meaning for his hearers.

The parallel passage in Aeschylus comes from the prayer of Orestes and Electra beside their father's grave[1]. 'O Earth,' cries Orestes, 'send up, I pray thee, my father to watch o'er my fight'; and Electra makes response, 'O Persephone, grant thou him still his body's strength unmarred,'

ὦ Περσέφασσα, δὸς δ' ἔτ' εὔμορφον κράτος.

It has been customary among translators and commentators to render εὔμορφον as if the second half of the compound were negligible; yet I can find no instance in which the word denotes anything but beauty of bodily shape. Let Aeschylus' own usage of it elsewhere be the index of his meaning here. The Chorus of the *Agamemnon*, musing on the fate of those who have fallen at Ilium, tell how in place of some there have been sent home to their kin mere parcels of ashes, 'while others, about the walls where they fell, possess sepulchres of Trojan soil, in comeliness of shape unmarred'—οἱ δ' αὐτοῦ περὶ τεῖχος θηκὰς Ἰλιάδος γᾶς εὔμορφοι κατέχουσιν[2]. My rendering then of εὔμορφον κράτος is right and cannot be evaded. Aeschylus, like Sophocles in the preceding passage, lightly yet surely, by the use of a single word, hints at the popular belief that the murdered man may rise again in bodily form to wreak his own vengeance.

Once again then the tragedians have come to our aid in the unravelling of this superstition. From them we learnt that incorruptibility and resuscitation were as great a terror to their contemporaries as they are to the modern peasants of Greece, and that actually the same imprecations of that calamity were in vogue then as at this day; and now again we receive from them corroboration of that which the horrible practice of mutilating a murdered man's corpse had already revealed, namely, that some of the dead who returned from their graves were believed to go to and fro, not in mere vain and pitiable wanderings, but with the fell purpose of revenging themselves upon their murderers.

The general tendency however of Greek literature, as we saw in the last section, was to replace the bodily *revenant* by a mere

[1] Aesch. *Choeph.* 480–1. [2] Aesch. *Ag.* 455.

ghost. In many cases the consequences of this literary modification were comparatively small; the ghost of Polydorus for example can sustain the part of pleading plaintively for burial no less effectively, perhaps indeed even more so, than a lusty *revenant*. But the case of *revenants* bent upon vengeance was different; the consequences of substituting a mere spirit were far-reaching; the part to be played consisted not in piteous words but in stern work; and for this part so frail and flimsy a creature as the Greeks pictured the ghost to be was absolutely unfitted. The only means of escaping from this difficulty was to represent the dead man as employing some instrument or agent of retribution; and accordingly, where the gross popular superstition would have had the murdered man emerge from his grave in bodily form to chase and to slay his murderer, literature in general confined the dead man to the unseen world and allowed him only to work by less directly personal means—sometimes by the hands of his next of kin, in other cases by a curse either automatically operative or executed by demonic agents. But it is important to observe that, whatever the means employed, literature cleaves to the old traditions, so far as artistic taste permits, by conceding to the murdered man the power of instigating the agents and controlling the instruments of his vengeance. His power is made spiritual instead of physical; but his personal activity is still recognised; he remains the prime avenger of his own wrongs.

These indirect methods of retribution must now be examined severally.

As regards the part taken by the next of kin to the murdered man in furthering the work of vengeance, I find no reason to suppose that literature deviated in any way from popular tradition. The idea of the vendetta is essentially primitive and at the same time perfectly harmonious with the belief that the murdered man is capable of executing his own revenge. The acknowledged power of the dead man has never in the minds of the Greek people served as an excuse for his kinsmen to sit idle; rather it has been an incentive to them to assist more strenuously in the task of vengeance, lest they themselves also should fall under the dead man's displeasure. On this point ancient lore and modern lore are completely agreed.

The best exponents of this view at the present day are a people

who can claim to be the most distinctively Hellenic inhabitants of the Greek mainland. The peninsula which terminates in the headland of Taenarum is the home of a race which is historically known to be of more purely Greek descent than the inhabitants of any other district, and which both in physical type and in social and religious customs stands apart—the Maniotes. Among their customs is the vendetta, and the beliefs on which it rests are in brief as follows. A man who has been murdered cannot rest in his grave until he has been avenged, but issues forth as a *vrykolakas* athirst for his enemy's blood; for, in Maina, one who has turned *vrykolakas* for this cause is still credited with some measure of reasonableness. To secure his bodily dissolution and repose, it is incumbent upon the next of kin to slay the murderer or, at the least, some near kinsman of the murderer. Until that be done, the son (to take the most common instance) lies under his dead father's curse; and, if he be so craven or so unfortunate as to find no opportunity for vengeance, the curse under which he has lived clings to him still in death, and he too becomes a *vrykolakas*.

The Maniote doctrine then amounts to this, that the murdered man rises from his grave to execute his own vengeance, which consists in bringing upon his murderer the same fate as he himself has suffered through his enemy's deed—a violent death and consequently resuscitation; but at the same time he demands the assistance of his nearest kinsman, under pain of suffering a like fate hereafter if his efforts in the cause of vengeance are feeble or fruitless. Thus the belief in powerful and vindictive *revenants* forms the very mainspring of the vendetta.

To this view both Euripides and Aeschylus subscribe in telling the story of Orestes. In the former we have the answer made by Orestes himself to the tirade of Tyndareus[1] against the vendetta: 'Nay, if by silence,' he says, 'I had consented unto my mother's deeds, what would my dead sire have done to me? Would he not have hated me and made me the sport of Furies? Hath my mother these goddesses at her side to help her cause, and hath not he that was more despitefully used?'[2] Surely no clearer statement could be made of Orestes' apprehension that, if he should

[1] Eur. *Or.* 491—541. [2] *Ibid.* 580 ff.

fail in the duty which his dead father imposed upon him, the dead man would turn other ministers of his vengeance upon his cowardly son, to plague him, as if he were an accomplice, with the same punishment as had been designed for the actual author of the murder. And similarly in Aeschylus we have the retort of Orestes to his mother's last warning before he slays her. 'Beware,' she says, 'the fiends thy mother's wrath shall rouse'; and he answers, 'But, an I flag, how should I 'scape my sire's?'[1] Thus according to the ancient tragedians the vendetta of Orestes was prompted by the same beliefs and fears as still stir the Maniotes thereto.

So far then as concerns the vengeance for Agamemnon's death, ancient drama added no new element to the popular beliefs, but was able to satisfy the requirements of art by judicious selection from them. The idea, to which the Maniotes still cling, that the murdered man in the form of a *revenant* avenges his own wrongs, is, save for the rare verbal allusions which we have noticed, rejected, and forms no part of the plot; but the belief, that fear of the dead man's wrath is a cogent motive to action on the part of his kinsman, is retained. And here it is interesting to observe that Aeschylus even justifies his rejection of the first half of the popular doctrine, and that too by a plea perfectly satisfactory to the popular mind. Agamemnon's case was peculiar. Not only had he been murdered, but his dead body according to Aeschylus, who is followed in this by Sophocles[2], had been mutilated (ἐμασχαλίσθη) by his murderers. The effect of such mutilation, as we have seen, was to render the *revenant* powerless to wreak vengeance with his own hands. Hence the work devolving upon Orestes would have been, in popular esteem, doubled; if murder alone had been committed, he would have worked in conjunction, as it were, with the dead man; but the super-added mutilation incapacitated the dead man for bodily work, and placed the whole burden of retribution on the shoulders of his son. This, plainly put, is the meaning of the words spoken by the Chorus in the *Choephori* to Orestes: 'Yea, and he was mutilated, for thou must know the worst. Cruel was she in the slaying of him, cruel still in the burial, in that she thought to make his doom a burden past bearing upon thy life[3].' Thus it may be claimed that Aeschylus,

[1] Aesch. *Choeph.* 924–5. Cf. also 293.
[2] Soph. *El.* 445.
[3] Aesch. *Choeph.* 439 ff.

in the peculiar conditions of the case which he here presents, follows unswervingly the popular doctrine. It is only Euripides who can fairly be said to have really suppressed anything in this part of the story without troubling to justify himself by the circumstances of Agamemnon's fate. But even Euripides, though he simply ignores in his plot the possibility of Agamemnon's bodily resuscitation, is faithful to the doctrine that the next of kin was actuated in seeking vengeance not by simple piety but by a lively fear of the dead man's wrath.

Moreover, this conception of the relations subsisting between the murdered man and his nearest kinsman did not merely furnish the *motif* of some fine passages of Tragedy; it served also a more prosaic purpose, and actually formed the basis first of Attic law concerning blood-guilt, and then of Plato's Laws in the same connexion.

At Athens, as is well known, the duty of prosecuting a murderer (or homicide) was imposed by law upon the nearest relative of the murdered man. But the obligation was not only legal; it was also, and indeed primarily, religious. The law did no more than affirm and regulate a custom which religious tradition had long established. To this fact Antiphon especially bears witness in certain passages[1] with which I must deal more fully later; but the whole tenor of his appeals to the religious feelings and fears of the jury is strictly in accord with the Maniote doctrine of the present day, save that in one small point he takes a more merciful view. In Maina it is held that, if the next of kin fail to avenge the dead man, no matter to what cause the failure be due, he falls a prey to the dead man's wrath. Antiphon on the contrary asserts that, if the next of kin have honestly done his best to bring the murderer to justice, he will not be punished for failure therein; and yet he does not represent the dead man as inactive in such a case, but dares to threaten the jury that the murdered man's anger will now descend, not upon his kinsman who has loyally striven to avenge him, but upon the jury who, by unjustly acquitting and harbouring[2] the murderer, make themselves accomplices in his crime and sharers in his pollution. This difference of opinion however is of minor importance, and seems to be

[1] Antiphon, pp. 119, 125, and 126.
[2] Cf. below, p. 459.

almost a necessary result of different social conditions. In ancient Athens the next of kin was required to proceed against the murderer by legal means, and not to commit a breach of law and order by personal violence. In modern Maina the kinsman who should have recourse to law and call in the police would be accounted a recreant; public opinion requires him to find an opportunity, openly or by ambush, of slaying the murderer with his own hand; this is to be his life's work, if need be, and the possibility of failure, save through want of enterprise and energy, is hardly contemplated. But as regards the main issue, namely the belief that the dead man himself is the prime avenger of his own wrongs and that his kinsman acts only under his instigation as an assistant in the work, modern superstition has the entire support both of the drama and of the law of ancient Athens.

Further corroboration is perhaps unnecessary; yet Plato's legislation in the matter of homicide must not be passed over; for it possesses this peculiar interest and importance of its own, that it was confessedly based upon a religious doctrine which Plato esteemed 'old even among the traditions of antiquity[1].' From what source he obtained the doctrine he does not definitely say; but, from a mention of Delphi in the passage immediately preceding as the supreme authority in all matters of purification from blood-guilt, it may fairly be surmised that this too is a piece of Delphic lore. At any rate Plato accepted it as an authoritative pronouncement to which the homicide must pay due heed.

'The doctrine,' says Plato, 'is that one who has lived his life in the spirit of a free man and meets with a violent death is wroth, while his death is yet recent, against the man who caused it, and when he sees him going his way in the places where he himself was wont to move, he strikes[2] him with the same quaking and terror with which he himself has been filled by the violence done to him, and in his own confusion confounds his enemy and all his doings to the utmost of his power, aided therein by the slayer's own conscience. And that is why it is right that the doer of the deed should in deference to the sufferer withdraw for the full space of the year, and should keep clear of the whole country which the dead man had frequented as his native land;

[1] Plato, *Leges*, 865 D, παλαιόν τινα τῶν ἀρχαίων μύθων.

[2] The word δειμαίνει, which in this passage seems clearly transitive, is perhaps a verbal reminiscence of the old language in which Plato had heard the tradition.

and if the dead man be a foreigner the slayer must hold aloof from the foreigner's country for the same period. Such then is the law; and, if a man voluntarily observe it, the dead man's nearest kinsman, whose duty it is to look to all this, must respect the slayer, and will do right to be at peace with him; but, if the slayer disregard this law and either presume to enter holy places and to sacrifice before he be purified, or, again, refuse to fulfil the allotted period in retirement, the nearest of kin must proceed against him on a charge of homicide, and, if a conviction be obtained, the penalties are to be doubled. But if the nearest of kin do not seek vengeance for the deed, it is held that the pollution devolves upon him, and that the sufferer (i.e. the dead man) turns upon him the suffering (i.e. that which the homicide himself should have incurred), and anyone who will may bring a suit against him and obtain a sentence of banishment for five years[1].'

Now for a right appreciation of this passage it must be borne in mind that Plato introduces his old tradition *à propos* of unintentional homicide. The actual penalties therefore are of a milder nature than those with which we have hitherto been concerned. Indeed it is not the difference in the penalties which should cause any surprise, but rather that an unintentional act should be punished at all; and it would seem perhaps that in citing this doctrine Plato sought to justify himself in retaining a provision of Attic law which at first sight appeared unjust. In Athens[2], we know, the involuntary homicide was required not only to undergo purification but to withdraw for a whole year from the country of the man whom he had slain. The hardship of this was manifest, and yet Plato acquiesced in the righteousness of it for the reason apparently that the year's retirement[3] was not a penalty imposed by the state, but a satisfaction which, according to religious tradition, the dead man demanded and might even himself enforce.

Plato in fact recognises no less frankly than others the personal activity of the slain man. He differs indeed in limiting the

[1] Plato, *Leges*, 865 D ff.

[2] Cf. Demosth., *in Aristocr.*, pp. 634 and 643.

[3] The word technically used of this withdrawal without formal sentence of banishment was ἀπενιαυτεῖν, or simply ἐξιέναι (cf. ὑπεξελθεῖν τῷ παθόντι in the above passage of Plato), or, as again in the same passage, ἀποξενοῦσθαι; whereas legal banishment was denoted by φεύγειν.

duration of that activity, when he says that the dead man's anger is hot against the slayer only while his death is still recent, and when by the provisions of his law he implies that the victim's desire for vengeance is fully satisfied by the slayer's withdrawal for the space of one year. But this difference is completely explained by the fact that Plato introduces the tradition in connexion with unintentional homicide, whereas previously we have had it treated in relation to wilful murder. Reasonably enough the man who has been accidentally slain is represented as angry only for a time, while the victim of deliberate murder nourishes a wrath implacable. The one drives the author of his misfortune into exile for a year and then repents him of the evil; the other dogs his enemy with vengeance not only for a year but throughout his life and even after death; and indeed Plato himself, when he passes from the subject of involuntary homicide to that of deliberate murder, proves his recognition of this difference by his enactments; for, at any rate in the most heinous case, namely the murder of a near kinsman, he expressly states[1] that the old principle 'as a man hath done, so must he suffer' admits of no abatement; the guilty man must die, and his body be left unburied.

But I must not yet enter upon a discussion of the actual punishments inflicted. Here I am only concerned to point out how completely Plato's 'old doctrine' harmonises with that which we have learnt from other sources concerning the personal activity of the dead man. First we read that the dead man terrifies and confounds the slayer to the utmost of his power, with the aid of the slayer's own conscience; and then again that his next of kin is under an obligation to obtain satisfaction for him, and is punished by him if he neglects that duty. Clearly the slayer's own conscience is no more than an instrument—a somewhat ineffective instrument, one might think, in a case of unintentional homicide—and the next of kin is no more than a minister, both of them employed and directed by the dead man himself. He it is who exacts his own vengeance.

The other literary method of mitigating the crude popular belief in a bodily *revenant* hunting down his enemy was to treat

[1] Plato, *Leges*, 872 D ff.

the murderer's punishment as the result of a curse. Such a curse was denoted usually by the word *μήνιμα*, which may perhaps be more exactly rendered by the phrase 'a manifestation of wrath (*μῆνις*)' on the part of some supernatural being[1], whether a god or the departed spirit of a man; when once provoked by deadly sin such as the murder of a kinsman or refusal of burial, this curse was held to cleave to the tainted family from generation to generation.

In the case of blood-guilt, which we are at present considering, the curse, as was said above, was held either to work spontaneously or to be executed by some powers of the nether world. The former view is more rarely adopted, but is clearly enough indicated in one or two passages of ancient literature. Plato in the *Phaedrus* speaks of most grievous sicknesses and sufferings being produced in certain families as the consequence of ancient curses (*παλαιῶν ἐκ μηνιμάτων*)[2]; and from the reminiscences and verbal echoes of Euripides' *Orestes* which appear in the passage[3] it is abundantly clear that the particular family which Plato had in mind was the blood-guilty house of Atreus. Here then there is no mention of any gods, no suggestion that the curse was executed by them or in the first instance proceeded from them. And the negative evidence of Plato's silence concerning the gods is turned to certainty by the positive statement of Aeschylus that, if a son neglect the task of vengeance, 'betwixt him and the gods' altars standeth the unseen barrier of his father's wrath[4]'; for if, in the case of the kinsman who by neglecting the duty of vengeance has made himself a partaker in the guilt and pollution of the murderer, the Wrath (*μῆνις*) by which he is punished both proceeds from the dead man and, far from needing the gods' furtherance in order to take effect, stands as it were on guard to hold the polluted man aloof from their altars, then surely the Wrath which pursues the murderer himself must emanate from the same source and possess the same spontaneous efficacy. The dead man himself then both launches the curse and controls its

[1] In early Greek, as witness the first line of the *Iliad*, the use of *μῆνις* was less restricted than in later times; but the word *μήνιμα* even in Homer occurs only, I think, in the phrase *μήνιμα θεῶν*. See below, p. 449.

[2] Plato, *Phaedrus*, § 49, p. 244 D.

[3] Cf. especially Eur. *Or.* 281–2, as pointed out by Bekker in his note on Plato, *Phaedrus*, *l.c.*

[4] Aesch. *Choeph.* 293.

course; and probably it was in deference to this doctrine that Plato formulated his own law, that, even in the case of a father being killed by his own son, the dying man might with his last breath remit the curse which such a deed incurred and exempt his son from all except the purifications and the temporary retirement imposed in cases of involuntary homicide[1].

But more frequently the execution of the curse is conceived to be the work of certain powers of the nether world. These powers however do not act on their own initiative; they are instigated to the task of vengeance by the murdered man himself. Here, no less than in the other renderings of the old tradition, the sufferer himself is the supreme avenger of his own sufferings. The most famous example of this conception is furnished by the plot of the *Eumenides*. The Furies are represented as the servants of Clytemnestra, faithful witnesses to her wrongs, exactors of blood for blood on her behalf[2]. When they slumber and allow Orestes to escape the while, her ghost approaches them in no suppliant manner for all their godhead, but chides them and urges them afresh, like hounds, upon the quarry's trail[3]. And, most significant of all, there is one passage in which they say of themselves that the name whereby they are known in their home beneath the earth is the name of Curses (Ἀραί)[4]; they are in fact the personification of those curses which a murdered man himself directs against his murderer. Nor is this notion confined to drama. Xenophon is little prone to poetic imaginings; yet he can find an argument for the immortality of the soul in what he considers an established fact of human experience, namely, that the spirits of those who have been unjustly slain inspire terrors in their murderers' hearts and 'send against them' certain 'avengers of blood' (παλαμναίους ἐπιπέμπουσι[5]). And elsewhere again and again we hear of the same avengers under a variety of names—μιάστορες, ἀλάστορες, προστρόπαιοι—names which will receive consideration later and by their very meaning and usage will confirm once more my contention that, by whatever instrument or agency the murder is represented as being avenged, ancient literature only departed from the primitive belief in bodily

[1] Plato, *Leges*, 869 A (Bekker's text); cf. also 869 E.
[2] See Aesch. *Eum.* 101 and 317 ff.; cf. Eur. *Or.* 583.
[3] *Ibid.* 94—139. [4] *Ibid.* 417. [5] Xenoph. *Cyrop.* VIII. 7, 18.

*revenants* executing their own vengeance at the one point at which the grossness of popular superstition must have offended educated sensibilities, and followed the old tradition as faithfully as might be in conceding to the dead man, if not bodily, yet personal, activity.

The same popular beliefs, *mutatis mutandis*, probably attached also to another class of *revenants*, dead men whose bodies had not received due burial. The necessary modifications of the superstition would be two in number. First, the anger of the dead man would not endure for ever, unless his body had been so treated that burial was no longer possible, but would cease with the performance of that which he returned to demand; and secondly, he would not be represented as using for his agent his next of kin, who in most cases of the kind would be the very person responsible to him for the neglect of burial. Literature therefore had here no choice of versions; the bodily re-appearance of the dead man was reckoned too gross an idea; the employment of his nearest kinsman to act on his behalf became in this case impossible; a curse was the only expedient. And this is the expedient which we actually find adopted. In the *Iliad* Hector adjures Achilles not to fulfil his threat of throwing his dead body to the dogs and to the fowls of the air, but to give him burial, 'lest,' he says, 'I become a cause of the gods' wrath against thee'—*μή τοί τι θεῶν μήνιμα γένωμαι*[1]—and the self-same phrase is put into the mouth of Elpenor's spirit in the *Odyssey* when he craves due burial of Odysseus[2]. The same idea occurs once more in Pindar's reference to Phrixus, who bade go unto the halls of Aeetes (for there in a strange land he had died, and had not received the burial-rites of his own country) and bring his spirit to rest, and whose bidding Jason is besought by Pelias to fulfil, for that 'already doth old age wait upon me; but with thee the blossom of youth is but burgeoning, and thou canst put away the wrath of powers beneath[3].' In each of these passages then the actual enforcement of the dead man's will is by means of a curse or 'manifestation of wrath'—for the same word *μήνιμα* (or *μῆνις*) is used; in each case also, as it happens, the curse does not operate automatically but is executed by gods—the method

[1] Hom. *Il.* XXII. 358. [2] Hom. *Od.* XI. 73. [3] Pind. *Pyth.* IV. 280 ff.

preferred also, as we saw, in cases of blood-guilt; but here also, as there, the personal activity of the dead man is frankly acknowledged; the phrase of Homer 'lest I become...' and that of Pindar 'Phrixus doth bid...' clearly suggest that the gods were instigated to intervene by the sufferer himself.

The case then stands thus. We learnt in the last chapter that the unburied dead no less than the murdered were popularly believed to become *revenants*. We have since learnt that the murdered, in the capacity of *revenants*, were popularly believed to avenge their own wrongs with their own hands, but that ancient literature commonly presents a modified version of that belief according to which the personal activity indeed of the dead man is recognised, but the instrument of his vengeance is a curse executed by demonic agents. We find now that literature assigns also to the unburied dead the same personal activity in punishing those whose neglect has caused their suffering, and by the same means. The reasonable inference is that here too we have a modified version of a popular belief that the unburied, like the murdered, not only became *revenants*, which we know, but, in the capacity of *revenants*, themselves punished those who refused or neglected to render them their due funeral rites.

Thus the same principle governed the whole system of the punishment incurred by men who were guilty either of murder or of leaving the dead unburied—the principle that the dead man whom they had injured in either of these ways himself requited those injuries. Hence, when we proceed to examine the actual punishments inflicted, we need no longer concern ourselves with the fact that literature attributes the infliction now to the nearest kinsman of the dead man and anon to some divine avenger; but, whatsoever instrument or agency is employed, we know that the dead man himself was believed to control and direct it, and therefore that the punishment thus effected was conceived to be such as the dead man himself willed and, in popular belief, could with his own hands enforce. Thus in the *Oresteia* the punishment of Clytemnestra is actually effected by Orestes, and again the punishment of Orestes is entrusted to the Furies; but Orestes is only the minister of his dead father, carrying out the work of retribution under pain of incurring the same punishment himself if by inaction he should consent unto his mother's crime; and the

Furies in like manner are only the servants of the dead Clytemnestra, instigated by her to their pursuit. The slaying of Clytemnestra and the sufferings of Orestes are the punishments which the dead Agamemnon and the dead Clytemnestra, even in the literary version of the story, impose, and, in a more primitive and gross form of it, might themselves have inflicted.

But before examining the nature of those punishments in detail, it will be well to recall the fact that to the eyes of the ancient Greeks murder or homicide always presented itself in two distinct aspects[1]. Regarded from one point of view, it was the gravest possible injury to the man who was slain. Viewed from the other, it was a source of 'pollution' (*μίασμα, μύσος, ἄγος*), an abomination to the gods and a peril to living men; for the taint of bloodshed was conceived as a contagious physical malady, which the polluted person by touch or even by speech[2] might communicate to his fellow-men, and not to them only, but to places which he visited, the market, the harbours, the temples[3]; nay, even the sanctity of the gods' images was not proof against the contamination of his bloodstained hands[4]. In brief, the two aspects of homicide were the moral and the religious aspects; and both moral and religious atonements were required. The wrong done to the dead man was requited by the sufferings which he in turn imposed; the pollution, being primarily a state of religious disability (for it involved, as Plato says[5], the enmity of the gods), was removed by a religious ceremony of purification.

How clearly marked was this distinction in antiquity is evident from Plato's laws on homicide, as a brief consideration of two or three special cases will show.

First, in the most venial case of homicide, where a man had killed his own slave, he incurred no punishment at all, but was bound none the less to get himself purified[6].

Secondly, in cases of the utmost enormity, as where a man wilfully murdered his father or mother, religion provided no means of purification. Blood-guilt in general was 'hard to cure'; but parricide belonged to the class of sins 'incurable[7].' Such a

[1] Cf. Plato, *Leges*, IX. *passim*, and especially p. 871.
[2] Cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 285 and 448 ff. [3] Plato, *Leges*, 868 A and 871 A.
[4] Cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 445. [5] Plato, *Leges*, 871 B. [6] *Ibid.* 865 C.
[7] Cf. Plato, *Leges*, p. 854 A, *δυσίατα καὶ ἀνίατα*.

murderer therefore must die, for, as Plato says, 'there is no other kind of purification' in this case than the paying of blood for blood. Religious purification in the ordinary sense of the word was refused, but the extreme punishment was demanded.

Thirdly, in the majority of cases of blood-guilt, where both purification and punishment were required, the two were clearly independent of each other. The purification of the involuntary homicide was to precede the year's retirement[1]. The religious ceremony cleansed the man from pollution, but could no more exempt him from making satisfaction to the dead man whom he had wronged, than absolution of sin pronounced in the Christian confessional can exempt from the legal consequences of crime. The Delphic priesthood itself, if we may trust the testimony of Aeschylus, claimed no more than the power to cleanse; for Apollo himself, holding Orestes guilty of manslaughter though not of murder, after granting him religious purification, does not intervene to save him from that exile which even the unintentional homicide was bidden by Attic law to undergo; nay, he even acquiesces in the necessity of Orestes' flight, bids him not faint before his wanderings are done, and promises only to set a limit thereto and to free him from the pursuing Furies in the end[2].

The distinction between the pollution and the injury, and between the purification and the punishment, being thus clearly recognised, it is necessary, in investigating the relations between the dead man and his murderer, to set the purely religious aspect of blood-guilt on one side, and to treat the punishments inflicted upon the murderer simply as the settling of an account between man and man. One point only as regards the pollution need be borne in mind, namely, that purification was granted to the homicide in the interests of gods and men whose abodes would otherwise be defiled by his presence, and that the dead man could not conceivably derive any satisfaction therefrom. On the contrary, his desire for vengeance would naturally lead him to interpose 'the unseen barrier of his wrath' betwixt the guilty man and those altars of the gods where alone purification could be won, and thus to keep his enemy still polluted; for his pollution, just because it was a peril to his fellowmen, carried with it the punishment of utter solitude until he was cleansed. When therefore, as will

[1] Cf. Plato, *Leges*, 866—874, *passim*. [2] Aesch. *Eum.* 74 ff.

appear later, the murdered man is described not only as an avenger of his own wrongs, but as one who strives to keep alive the religious defilement of the murderer, there is no confusion of the moral and the religious aspects of murder, but rather the injured man is conceived as wreaking his vengeance by every possible means, not only directly by the sufferings which he can personally inflict, but also indirectly by the privation which the state of pollution necessarily involves.

The nature of the direct acts of vengeance, which are now to be examined, can best be learnt from that passage of the *Choephori* which depicts the horrible penalties awaiting Orestes if by inaction he should make himself a consenter to the crime of Clytemnestra. We have already learnt that in such a case the defaulting kinsman incurred precisely the same punishment as he should have assisted to inflict on the actual murderer. That therefore with which Orestes was threatened was that to which Clytemnestra was already condemned. The punishments named are those with which, according to popular superstition, a murdered man, risen in bodily substance from the grave, could requite his enemy. For no one, I suppose, would suggest that Aeschylus, who followed popular tradition so scrupulously in all that did not absolutely conflict with dramatic propriety, invented for himself the whole scheme of penalties here set forth. That he was bound to modify the means whereby the punishments were inflicted, in order to avoid the incongruity of a *revenant* upon the stage, we already know and shall see again; but how closely he adhered to the popularly accepted scheme of punishments, even when he was forced to find some new means of inflicting them, will incidentally be shown by that detailed examination to which his list of penalties must now be subjected.

The first penalty is the physical torment of leprous blains that consume the body and age the sufferer prematurely. At first we are inclined to wonder why leprosy is selected by the dead man as his means of retaliation against his enemy; but a little reflection will lead us to guess that in this particular act of vengeance Aeschylus could not actually reproduce the popular doctrine. The common-folk believed in the bodily activity of the dead; and, if they believed also that bodily sufferings were part of the punishment which the murderer incurred, the two

beliefs must surely have been correlated; the physical sufferings of the murderer must have been conceived to be caused by the physical activity of the murdered; or, to put it more plainly, if we may elucidate ancient superstition by the aid of modern, the murdered man, in the form of a *revenant* bent on vengeance, was believed to leap upon his victim and rend him with his teeth and suck out his very life-blood. Clearly Aeschylus could not commit himself to so crude a presentation of a *revenant*; he could not conjure up before his audience the spectacle of the dead Agamemnon athirst for actual blood; but equally clearly he knew that popular superstition, and had it in his mind when he depicted the horrors of leprosy. For the bodily assault of a *revenant* he substituted a natural malady engendered by a dead man's unseen wrath; but he described the operation of that malady in language suggested by the popular presentment of a personal avenger more reasonable indeed in his purpose but scarcely less ferocious in his acts than a Slavonic vampire—'blains that leap upon the flesh and with savage jaws eat out its erstwhile vigour[1].' The means of inflicting the punishment is changed, but the actual punishment of the murderer is the same as if it were not leprosy but in very truth a vampire, which leapt upon him and gnawed his flesh and drained his life-blood. So faithful is Aeschylus to the crude popular idea of a retribution which required that he who had spilled another's blood should have his own blood drunk by his victim.

The second penalty is the mental agony of one whom 'madness and vain terror sprung of the darkness do shake and confound[2].' Here again the punishment is in strict accord with that law that a man must suffer as he has wrought. That old tradition recorded and revered by Plato, on which I have already touched, taught that every man who was slain by violence was himself filled thereby with quaking and terror and confusion of spirit, and accordingly sought his revenge in terrifying and confounding the slayer. No clearer commentary on the lines of Aeschylus could be desired. Plato explains how the terror and the confusion—for he employs the selfsame words as Aeschylus—by which the murderer is overwhelmed are the exact counterpart of the mental anguish which his violence brought upon his victim.

[1] Aesch. *Choeph.* 280–1. [2] Aesch. *Choeph.* 288–9.

Aeschylus then once again was following closely an old tradition of the popular religion. It matters not at all that in this case he names the Erinyes as the agents, just as previously he made leprosy the instrument, of the dead man's vengeance. The actual sufferings which the murderer must undergo are in this case also identical in character with those which he caused to his victim.

The third punishment of the blood-guilty man consists in wandering friendless and outcast; and this again is no arbitrary invention of Aeschylus, but was clearly prescribed by that old tradition which, in Plato's reckoning, justified the legal imposition of a year's retirement even upon those who had shed blood involuntarily. Where then is that correspondence, which our examination of the first two penalties has led us to expect, between this third punishment and the sufferings of the dead man who exacts it? Is there the same nicety of retribution? Clearly so. The dead man became in popular belief a *revenant*, a wanderer from out the grave, pitiable in his loneliness, cut off from all friendly intercourse with living men, not yet admitted to the fellowship of the departed, the sorriest of outcasts. Such was the misery to which the murderer by his act of violence had brought his victim; such therefore too the misery which the murderer himself must taste in his wanderings and loneliness here on earth, though it were but a foretaste of more consummate misery hereafter. Truly even in life the murderer was made to suffer as he had wrought.

And then comes the fourth penalty, death; for though Aeschylus, in the list of punishments which we have now before us, touches but lightly on this, the most obvious form of retribution, yet elsewhere he repeatedly affirms, and many another re-echoes, the doctrine that blood cries for blood[1]. Perhaps in this passage he felt that by depicting the gnawing pangs of leprosy he had sufficiently proclaimed the sure approach of death; perhaps he passed it by as a slight thing in comparison with the horror that yet remained to be told. For death did not close the tale of punishments; the blood-guilty man, so chant the Furies, 'though he be dead is none too free[2].'

And so we pass to the last requirement of vengeance, that the outcast shall have no friend to honour his dead body with the

[1] Cf. especially Aesch. *Choeph.* 400 ff.
[2] Aesch. *Eum.* 336, *θανὼν δ' οὐκ ἄγαν ἐλεύθερος.*

due funeral-rites, whereby alone the desired dissolution could be secured, but is doomed to lie unburied, incorruptible. Such is my interpretation of the closing lines of the passage before us; and there is no need to repeat the defence of my contention that the word *ταριχευθέντα* must be understood in its literal and proper sense. But it will not be out of place to note here how, in the *Eumenides*, Aeschylus' mind was still pervaded by the same popular belief. The word *ταριχεύεσθαι* means, in the literal sense in which I have taken it, to be withheld from corruption by some process of curing or drying; and, fantastic though it may seem, it is that process of 'drying,' if I may use the word, which the Furies are charged by Clytemnestra to carry out against her murderer. Let Aeschylus' own words prove it. Hear first how Clytemnestra's ghost with her last words spurs on the Furies to this special task:

> *σὺ δ' αἱματηρὸν πνεῦμ' ἐπουρίσασα τῷ,*
> *ἀτμῷ κατισχναίνουσα, νηδύος πυρὶ,*
> *ἕπου, μάραινε δευτέροις διώγμασιν*[1].
> 'Up and pursue! let thy breath lap his blood
> With sering reek, as were thy bowels a furnace,
> Till he be shrivelled in the redoubled chase.'

And the Furies prove by their threats to Orestes that they are not unmindful of their charge. 'Nay, in return for the blood thou hast shed, thou must give me to suck the red juices from thy living limbs. Thyself must be my meat, my horrid drink.' 'Yea, while thou livest, I will drain thee dry, ere I hale thee 'neath the earth[2].' And the same thought is emphasized yet again in that binding-spell which the Furies chant to draw him whom they already account their prey from his vain refuge at Athene's altar:

> *ἐπὶ δὲ τῷ τεθυμένῳ*
> *τόδε μέλος, παρακοπὰ, παραφορὰ φρενοδαλής,*
> *ὕμνος ἐξ Ἐρινύων,*
> *δέσμιος φρενῶν, ἀφόρμικτος, αὐονὰ βροτοῖς*[3].
> 'Over our victim thus chant we our spell,
> Rocking and wrecking the torturèd soul,
> The jubilant song of Avengers,
> Fettering the soul with no 'witchments of lute,
> A spell as of drought[4] upon mortals.'

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 137–9.
[2] *Ibid.* 264–7.
[3] *Ibid.* 328 ff., and again 343 ff.
[4] This rendering of the word *αὐονά* has been challenged, but has the support of the Scholiast who explains it by the words *ὁ ξηραίνων τοὺς βροτούς*, (the hymn) which dries and withers men.

Such is the wild, weird refrain of the Furies' incantation; and in its closing phrase are re-echoed the closing words of Clytemnestra's charge.

Will anyone then venture to say that Aeschylus had no special reason for thus repeating thrice within the compass of some two hundred lines the same threat? For the punishment threatened is substantially the same, though the means of inflicting it vary. Now it is the breath of the Furies which shall scorch up the victim's very blood; now it is their lips that shall suck him dry; now a magic spell to parch and shrivel him; but ever the effect is the same; the bloodguilty man shall lie in death a sere and sapless carcase, already 'damned to incorruption[1] even in that doom which wastes all else.' And the only reason which I can conceive for the poet's insistence upon this thought is that here again, as in all the former punishments, he was reproducing a popular belief substantially the same then as it is in Maina now, namely, that the murdered man, having become a *revenant*, sucked his murderer's blood and made him also in his turn a *revenant*.

Nor is Aeschylus the only ancient authority for the idea of some such retribution after death. Plato, in a passage of the *Phaedrus* already cited, contemplates the activity of a murdered man's wrath (*μήνιμα*) not only in the present time but also hereafter[2]; and in his *Laws* there is a provision, not assuredly of his own devising but dating from the very beginning of Greek legislation, which can only have been designed to insure the complete vengeance of the murdered man on his murderer even beyond death. A man convicted of the wilful murder of a near kinsman[3] was punishable not only with death but with a further penalty: 'the attendants of the jury and the magistrates having killed him shall cast out his corpse naked at an appointed cross-roads without the city, and all the magistrates, representing the whole city, shall take each a stone and cast it upon the head of the corpse and thereby free the whole city from guilt, and thereafter they shall carry the corpse to the borders of their land and cast it out, in accordance with the law, unburied[4].' Now the law, we know, in ordaining the penalty

[1] The tense of *ταριχευθέντα* in the phrase from which I started (*Choeph.* 296) is hereby explained.

[2] Plato, *Phaedrus*, 244 E, *πρός τε τὸν παρόντα καὶ τὸν ἔπειτα χρόνον.*

[3] Plato's list is 'father, mother, brother, sister, or child,' *Leges*, IX. 873 A.

[4] Plato, *Leges*, IX. 873 B.

of death, ordained it as a satisfaction of the murdered man's claims to vengeance. The State, so to speak, sided with the dead man and assisted him to exact blood for blood. Again the stoning of the dead body by representatives of the city was intended, we are expressly told, to free the whole city from guilt—from guilt, that is, in the eyes of the murdered man, who might otherwise visit his wrath upon the city as though it had consented to the crime or had too lightly punished it. Can it then be supposed that the State was actuated by any other motive in carrying out the rest of the penalty? It was surely still in deference to the murdered man's desires that the murderer's corpse was left unburied. To refuse burial was the surest means of condemning the man to resuscitation and thereby of satisfying his former victim's uttermost demands.

Thus our detailed examination of the Aeschylean catalogue of penalties establishes beyond doubt that of which we had already had some evidence, namely, that all the punishments which were inflicted on the murderer—and, in popular belief, inflicted by the murdered man on his own behalf—were an exact reproduction of the sufferings which the murdered man himself had undeservingly endured, and culminated therefore, as they should, in the blood-guilty man becoming, like his victim, a *revenant*.

The main problem then of this section is now fully solved; but incidentally much light has been thrown upon the character ascribed by the Greek people in antiquity to those *revenants* who were not merely pitiable sufferers but were active in bringing a like doom upon those who had wronged them. And the character of these Avengers approximates very closely to that of the modern *vrykolakes*. True, there is one fundamental difference; the ancient Avenger directed his wrath solely against the author of his sufferings, or at the most extended it only to those who, owing to him the duty of furthering his vengeance, had proved lax and cowardly therein; the modern *vrykolakas* is unreasoning in his wrath and plagues indiscriminately all who fall in his way. But the actual sufferings which the *vrykolakas* inflicts are identical with those which furnished Aeschylus with his tale of threatened horrors. Modern stories there are in plenty, which tell how the *vrykolakas* springs upon his victim and rends him and drinks his blood; how sheer terror of his aspect has driven men mad; how, in order to

escape him, whole families have been driven forth from their native island to wander in exile[1]; how death has often been the issue of his assaults; and how those whom a *vrykolakas* has slain become themselves *vrykolakes*. Only his unreasoning and indiscriminate fury is necessarily of Slavonic origin; his acts are the acts of those ancient *revenants* whose own wrongs rightfully made them the Avengers of blood. Apart from the one Slavonic trait, the characters of the *vrykolakas* and the ancient Avenger are identical.

And perhaps this identity is most clearly seen in the one case in which the old Avenger punished not only the immediate author of his own wrongs, but a whole community which had subsequently given the guilty man an asylum. We have noticed how Antiphon ventured to threaten an Athenian jury with such punishment at the hands of the dead man if they wrongfully acquitted his murderer. In the same spirit Aeschylus makes the Furies, as the agents of the dead Clytemnestra, menace the whole land of Attica with a venomous curse that shall blast man and beast and herb in revenge for the wresting of Orestes from their grasp[2]. And such too is the dread which in the *Phoenissae* of Euripides stirs Creon to make to the blood-guilty Oedipus this appeal: 'Nay, remove thee hence: verily 'tis not in scorn that I say this, nor in enmity to thee, but because of thine Avengers, in fear lest the land suffer some hurt[3].' In such cases the punishments with which a whole community is threatened, although still a reasonable measure, approach most nearly to the indiscriminate violence of the modern *vrykolakas*.

For the fulfilment of such threats as these we must turn to the *Supplices* of Aeschylus, and there we shall find a description of just such a devastation as is said to have been suffered by the inhabitants of Santorini and many other places in the seventeenth century. The story of Aeschylus tells how 'there came unto the Argive land, from the shore of Naupactus, Apis, son of Apollo, both healer and seer, and cleansed the land of monsters that destroyed mankind, even of those that Earth, tainted with the

[1] Cf. especially Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, I. p. 163, who was an eye-witness of such an occurrence in Myconos.

[2] Cf. Aesch. *Eumen.* 780 ff., and (for the withdrawal of the curse) 938 ff.

[3] Eur. *Phoen.* 1592 ff. The word here translated 'avengers' is ἀλάστορες, which is fully discussed below, pp. 465 ff.

pollutions of blood shed of old, sent up in wrath to work havoc, fearsome as a dragon-brood to dwell among[1].' What then were these monsters? I will venture to say that any Greek peasant of to-day, could he but read and understand the Aeschylean description, would furnish a better commentary upon those lines than the most learned discourse thereon that any scholar has written; and his commentary would be summed up in the one word *vrykolakes*. For, vigorous as the description is, its vigour comes less of dramatic word-building than of fidelity to the horrors of popular superstition, and no other single passage could so fully establish the unity of ancient and modern belief. For while the actual language contains all the words[2] which in antiquity were bound up with the superstition—the 'pollution' which comes of bloodshed, the 'wrath' which follows thereon and in which Earth herself is here made to share, and the 'sending up' by Earth of the Avengers—the thought of the passage is a faithful reflection of what the Greek peasants still believe, that a violent death is among the chief causes of resuscitation, that the earth sends up the dead man raging to deal destruction, and that with others of his kind he consorts and conspires in veritable dragon-bands; and men still tell of gifted seers and healers, such as Apis, summoned in hot haste to panic-stricken hamlets to allay the pest. The *κνώδαλα βροτοφθόρα* of Aeschylus, 'the monsters that destroy mankind,' are indeed but little removed from the modern *vrykolakes*.

Is it not then clear also on what sources Aeschylus drew for his picture of the Furies themselves? We have seen how, for dramatic purposes, they were substituted for a *revenant* wreaking his own vengeance. Clytemnestra herself in bodily form should have been the Avenger, if popular superstition had not been in this respect too gross; but the Erinyes take her place in the actual execution of vengeance, and she herself appears only as a ghost to instigate them to their work. But, when that substitution was effected, did not Aeschylus clearly transfer to the Erinyes the whole character and even the appearance popularly attributed to the human Avenger? They are black and loathly to look upon[3];

[1] Aesch. *Suppl.* 262 ff., reading in 266 *μηνιτὴ δάκη*, the emendation of Porson.
[2] *l.c.* 265–6, *μιάσμασιν...μηνιτή...ἀνῆκε*.
[3] Aesch. *Eum.* 52.

their breath is deadly to approach[1]; the smell of blood is a joy to them[2]; they follow like hounds upon their victim's trail[3]; they torment him both body and soul[4]; they fasten upon his living limbs and gorge themselves with his blood[5]; and if any would harbour him from their pursuit, the venom of their wrath falls like a plague upon the land, and devastates it[6]; they are monsters, *κνώδαλα*[7]—and the recurrence of this word is significant—abhorrent alike to gods and to men[8]. The description is surely not that which Aeschylus would himself have invented for beings who should come afterwards to be worshipped as 'revered goddesses,' *σεμναὶ θεαί*. The difficulty of that transition in the play itself cannot but arrest the attention of every reader; it is a difficulty which even the genius of Aeschylus could not remove. Why then did he draw so loathsome a portrait of the Erinyes in the earlier part of the play? Why did he create that difficulty? The reason, I suggest, was that he followed once more, and this time almost too faithfully, the popular traditions, and, while he would not represent a real *revenant* on the stage, transferred to those demonic agents, by whom the work of vengeance was vicariously performed, all the attributes popularly associated with the prototypes of the modern *vrykolakas*.

Thus then the history of the modern belief in *vrykolakes* has been fully traced. The ancients also believed that for certain causes—the same causes in the main as are still assigned—men were doomed to remain incorruptible after death and to rise again in bodily form from their graves, and that one class of these *revenants*, those namely who had wrongs of their own to avenge, inflicted upon their enemies (and upon any who shielded or harboured them) the same sufferings as are now generally believed to be inflicted in an unreasoning manner by all classes of *vrykolakes* alike upon mankind at large, with no justification, such as a natural desire for vengeance might afford, in the case of those whose resuscitation is not the outcome of any injury or neglect at the hands of other men, and with no discrimination between friend and foe on the part of those who have real wrongs to avenge. Remove the unreasoning element in the character of the

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 53, 137–9.
[2] *Ibid.* 254.
[3] *Ibid.* 75, 111, 131, 246–7.
[4] *passim.*
[5] 183–4, 264.
[6] *Ibid.* 780 ff., 938 ff.
[7] *Ibid.* 644.
[8] *Ibid.* 70, 73, 644.

*vrykolakas*, and the *revenant* in which the folk of ancient Greece believed remains.

But, if they believed in him, they must have called him by some name. Aeschylus' phrase *κνώδαλα βροτοφθόρα*, 'monsters that destroy mankind,' is a description rather than a name. What were the reasonable *vrykolakes* of ancient Greece called? That is now the one question which must be answered in order to make our enquiry complete.

Briefly my answer is this, that the particular class of *revenants* with which the present section has mainly dealt, the Avengers of blood, were known by three several names, *μιάστωρ*, *ἀλάστωρ*, and *προστρόπαιος*, but that literature contains no word which could serve as a collective designation for all classes alike. I hope however to show that the Greek language was not originally defective in this respect, but that the term *ἀλάστωρ*, although regularly used from the fifth century onwards in the narrow sense of an Avenger, had originally a wider application and denoted simply a *revenant*.

Now the interpretation which I give to these three words is not that which is commonly accepted. Anyone who will turn to a lexicon will find that to each of the three is assigned a double signification in connexion with blood-guilt. All three are said to denote either a god who punishes the blood-guilty or the blood-guilty man who is punished. Thus a god, it is alleged, may be called *μιάστωρ* (literally a 'polluter') because he punishes the polluted—a somewhat obvious misnomer; or again *ἀλάστωρ*, because he 'does not forget' but punishes the sinner—a derivation which, as I shall show later, cannot be accepted; or thirdly *προστρόπαιος*, as the being who was 'turned to' by the murdered man and was besought to avenge his cause—a somewhat circuitous way for the word to arrive at its active sense of 'Avenger.' And, secondly, a man, it is said, was called *μιάστωρ* when, being himself polluted, he was liable to be 'a polluter' of other men with whom he came in contact—a view which is certainly defensible; *ἀλάστωρ* as one whose sin 'could not be forgotten'—an interpretation almost beyond the pale of serious discussion; and *προστρόπαιος* because, being blood-guilty, he 'turned towards' some god for purification—an explanation which may be right—whence the word came to denote in general a polluted person who still needed purification.

Thus in my view, as I have indicated, the greater part of the information in the lexicons with regard to these three words is inaccurate; and my reasons for disputing the received interpretations will be set forth point by point as I offer my own interpretations in their stead.

In dealing with the first group of meanings assigned to the three words, by which they came, somehow or other, to be used with the common active signification of 'Avenger,' my main contention will be that, as regards their primary and strictest usage, all three words were applied not to gods but to men—men who, having been murdered, sought to requite their murderers—and were only secondarily extended to the agents, whether divine or human, to whom those dead men committed the task of vengeance; but I shall also endeavour to show, as regards the literal meaning of the three words severally, that the interpretation by means of which their final sense of 'Avenger' has generally been elicited from them is in each case wrong, and that, in the case of the word *ἀλάστωρ* in particular, a right understanding of its original meaning gives very important results.

And in dealing with the second group of meanings, by which the three words are said to denote three only slightly different aspects of one and the same person—a murderer who is *μιάστωρ* as polluted and spreading pollution, *ἀλάστωρ* as pursued by vengeance, and *προστρόπαιος* as still needing purification—I shall maintain that these alleged uses of the first two words do not exist, and, as regards the third, I will offer a suggestion, but a suggestion only, as to the means by which it acquired this signification which it unquestionably bore.

It will be convenient to deal first with *μιάστωρ* and *ἀλάστωρ* as being parallel in usage throughout, and to reserve *προστρόπαιος* for later consideration.

The clearest example of that which I take to be the original usage of *μιάστωρ* is furnished by Euripides. In that scene of mutual recrimination between Medea and Jason, after that in revenge for her husband's faithlessness she has slain their children, there comes at last from her lips the brutal taunt, as she points to the dead, 'They live no more: that truth at least will sting thee'; and Jason answers, 'Nay, but they live, to wreak vengeance on

thy head (*σῷ κάρᾳ μιάστορες*)[1].' No language could be more simple, more explicit. The very children who lay there murdered at Medea's feet, they and none other should be the *Miastores*, the Avengers of their own foul deaths.

But of course the word has other applications also. When Aeschylus[2] made the Erinyes threaten that even when Orestes should have fled beneath the earth, he should find another Avenger (*μιάστορα*) to plague him in their stead, the whole tenor of the passage compels us to understand that that other Avenger is some deity or demon of the nether world—a divine, not a human, *Miastor*, though at the same time one who will act, like the Erinyes themselves, on behalf of the murdered Clytemnestra.

And, yet again, the same term is applied to a living man, when, as next of kin to him who has been murdered, he is in duty bound to exact vengeance. This time Sophocles is our authority, and the person of whom the word is used is Orestes. 'Oft,' says Electra to Clytemnestra, 'oft hast thou reproached me with saving him to take vengeance upon thee (*σοὶ τρέφειν μιάστορα*)[3].'

These three passages then illustrate the threefold application of the name *Miastor*, and the question to be answered is which represents the primary usage of the word. To multiply instances of each or any would be of no avail; the question is not of the frequency of each usage; the commonest is not necessarily the earliest. How then is the question to be answered? It is, I think, already answered. We have seen that in popular belief the murdered man was the prime avenger of his own wrongs, and that even in literature, when the execution of vengeance is wholly transferred either to the nearest kinsman or to some demonic power, the murdered man is still recognised as the principal and the others are only his agents. It is this relation between them which settles the question. A principal does not act in the name of his agents, but the agents in the name of their principal. The name *Miastor* therefore belonged first to the dead man himself, and was only extended afterwards to those who wrought vengeance on his behalf.

So much for the usage of the word. Next, how did it acquire

[1] Eur. *Med.* 1370. [2] Aesch. *Eum.* 177. [3] Soph. *El.* 603.

the meaning of 'Avenger,' which it undoubtedly possessed? This can be only a matter of opinion. But since it appears to me unscholarly and illogical to suppose that a word, which on the grounds of formation must have first meant 'one who causes pollution,' could have come to mean 'one who punishes pollution,' I may at least offer an alternative suggestion. The murdered man, I admit, can hardly be said to have 'caused' the pollution of his murderer, or at any rate he could only have caused it involuntarily. But he might well be regarded as active in debarring the murderer from the means of purification and in keeping the pollution, as it were, fresh and virulent, with intent to isolate his enemy and to ban him from the abodes of his fellow-men. And some indication of such an activity is afforded by the Erinyes—acting, as always, on Clytemnestra's behalf; they refuse to acknowledge the purification granted by Apollo to Orestes, and they say moreover that their task is to 'keep dark and fresh the stain of blood[1].' The murdered man may therefore have been believed, if not actually to cause and to create, yet at least to promote and to re-create, the pollution of his foe, and, by keeping the stains of blood as it were from fading or being cleansed away, to wreak some part of his vengeance. In this way the transition from the sense of 'polluter' to that of 'avenger' is at least, I submit, intelligible. This however is only a side-issue. The important point is that the word *Miastor*, however it may have come to mean 'Avenger,' was primarily applied to the *revenant* himself, and only secondarily to any god.

The next name to be considered, *ἀλάστωρ*, is commonly accounted a synonym of *μιάστωρ*, denoting in actual usage a 'god of vengeance,' and meaning literally 'one who does not forget' blood-guiltiness. I too hold it to be a synonym of *Miastor*, but to denote therefore primarily not a god but a human *revenant* seeking vengeance, and only afterwards, by a transference of usage, a god or living man acting in the name of the dead; while, as for the supposed derivation, I count it absolutely untenable.

And first as regards the application of the word; after what has been, I hope, a fairly exhaustive study of the passages of classical literature in which it occurs, I am bound to confess that,

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 349, reading *μαυροῦμεν νέον αἷμα.*

though the instances of its use are far more numerous than those of *Miastor*, I am still unable to select three passages and to say 'Here are my proofs of the triple application of the word.' Indeed all that I can prove by the evidence of any single passage taken alone is curiously enough the existence of what I take to have been the rarest of the three usages—the application of the name *Alastor* to the kinsman of the dead man, as being the agent of his vengeance. Just as Sophocles speaks of Orestes being preserved as a *Miastor* to take vengeance on Clytemnestra for his father's death, so does Aeschylus make the same Orestes name himself an *Alastor* on the score of the vengeance which he has taken. 'Queen Athene,' he prays, 'at Loxias' bidding am I come; receive thou me graciously, avenger as I am, no murderer, nor of defiled hand...*ἀλάστορα, οὐ προστρόπαιον, οὐδ' ἀφοίβαντον χέρα*[1].' Such, I am convinced, is the right rendering of the passage. The lexicons indeed cite the line as an example of the alleged passive meaning of *ἀλάστωρ*—one who suffers from divine vengeance, an accursed wretch[2]; and I acknowledge that such a meaning would make passable sense of the passage; for Orestes was indeed suffering from the vengeance of the Erinyes. But I hold, and I shall endeavour to prove later, that *ἀλάστωρ* never possessed a passive meaning, and I claim moreover that the active meaning of 'Avenger,' which I attribute to the word here as elsewhere, is immensely preferable in itself. For Orestes throughout pleads justification[3]; he has avenged murder, not committed it; he has discharged a duty to his dead sire, not perpetrated a wanton crime against his mother; he slew her indeed, but his motive was pious, and the ordaining of his act divine. On the grounds therefore, first, of the word's own active meaning, secondly, of the whole trend of Orestes' defence of his conduct, and last, but by no means least, of the exact parallel furnished by Sophocles' use of the word *Miastor*, I am confident that *Alastor* as applied by Orestes to himself means an 'Avenger.'

That the word however was not primarily applied to the kinsman acting on behalf of the murdered man will be universally conceded; in the vast majority of passages some supernatural being is clearly intended. But it has been too hastily assumed that the

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 236. [2] L. and S. s.v.
[3] Cf. Aesch. *Choeph.* 1026 ff., and *Eumen. passim.*

supernatural avengers were always gods or demons; that they were often so conceived I do not doubt; but, as a matter of fact, I have discovered no single passage of classical literature which can be said finally and absolutely in itself to demand that interpretation. In many instances the probabilities are in favour of the *Alastores* being regarded as a class of avenging demons; in many others it is equally good or even better to suppose that they are the dead men themselves in person.

What then are the foundations upon which the received notion, that the *Alastores* were always gods, is based? It might perhaps be urged that the word *Alastor* found a place among the many epithets and titles conferred by worshippers upon Zeus[1] in order to indicate the particular exercise of his all-reaching power which their hearts desired. It might also be urged that Clement of Alexandria names the *Alastores* among those classes of gods whom the pagan Greeks had evolved from the naughtiness of their own imagination as types and personifications of the baser human passions[2]. But neither of these facts can serve to substantiate the contention that the *Alastores* were primarily and necessarily gods. The occasional use of a word as an epithet of Zeus cannot be held to prove the general appropriation of that word to a class of lesser gods; while the statement of Clement is the statement of a man designedly vilifying the whole Greek religion, neither appreciating nor desirous to appreciate its refinements, but willing rather to overwhelm it utterly, its better and its worse elements alike, with the torrent of his invective and reprobation. To him the *Alastores* appeared as supernatural beings instinct with the pagan passion of revenge, false gods therefore or devils, fit objects whereon to pour out the vials of righteous wrath and Christian scorn. He was not concerned to be wholly just or wholly accurate. Indeed the very sources from which he drew the idea that the *Alastores* were gods are still open to us; it is the Greek Tragedians whom he holds guilty of this naughty invention; it is the Greek Tragedians who remain for us the fountain-head of information concerning these Avengers, and who will on examination make it clear that they were not primarily or necessarily gods.

The single passage in Greek Tragedy which has been often

[1] Cf. Preller, *Griech. Mythol.*, I. p. 145 (edit. 4, Carl Robert).
[2] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* II. § 26.

regarded as evidence in favour of Clement's classification of *Alastores* among gods is on fuller enquiry rather a refutation of that view. In the *Persae* of Aeschylus the messenger, who reports to the queen the disaster which has befallen the Persian fleet, sets it down to supernatural agency:

> ἦρξεν μέν, ὦ δέσποινα, τοῦ παντὸς κακοῦ
> φανεὶς ἀλάστωρ ἢ κακὸς δαίμων ποθέν[1].

This has generally been taken to mean that the beginning of the disaster was due to the sudden appearance of 'some vengeful or malicious deity.' But elsewhere in Tragedy *ἀλάστωρ* is treated not as adjective but as substantive; and, since there is no compulsion to suppose other than the ordinary use of the word here, it appears better to translate the phrase 'some Avenger or some malicious god.' In other words the real, if unemphatic, contrast implied in the phrase is not between *ἀλάστωρ* and *κακός*—no contrast is possible there[2]—but between *ἀλάστωρ* and *δαίμων*. The inference therefore is rather that the *Alastor* in this passage was not conceived as a deity.

There are other passages of Greek Tragedy also in which the balance of probability seems to me to incline towards interpreting the name *Alastor* in the sense of a *revenant* and not of a god. Two such occur in the *Medea* of Euripides—the same play, be it noted, which contains that perfectly plain statement that the dead children of Medea are themselves the *Miastores* who will punish her. The first is in the scene in which Medea works herself up to the perpetration of her crime. Passionate love of her children, passionate jealousy and fury against their father, alternate in tragic turmoil, until the tense agony of spirit is let loose in that fierce oath,

> 'No, by the Avengers that lurk deep in hell,
> Ne'er shall it come to pass that I should leave
> My children to mine enemies' despite.
> Most surely they must die; and since they must,
> 'Twas my womb bare them, 'tis my hand shall slay[3].'

[1] Aesch. *Pers.* 353.

[2] This fact is recognised by Geddes in his edition of the *Phaedo*, in the course of his note (p. 280 ff.) on the difficulty concerning the words *ἢ λόγου θείου τινὸς* in cap. 33 (p. 85 D). He does not however infer that the words really contrasted are *ἀλάστωρ* and *δαίμων*, but claims for the particle *ἤ* an epexegetic sense ('or, in other words,') besides its usual disjunctive sense ('or else'). I am far from being satisfied that the epexegetic use of *ἤ* existed at all in Classical Greek, which idiomatically employed *καί* in that way. At any rate its existence is not proved by the other passages which Geddes cites—Aesch. *Pers.* 430 and Soph. *Phil.* 934—where the *ἤ* perhaps equals *vel* rather than *aut*, but has none of the epexegetic sense of *sive*.

[3] Eur. *Med.* 1059 ff.

Strong and terrible would be the oath even if the *Alastores*, whose wrath Medea thus defies, were gods or spirits; but the force and the horror are doubled, if the *Alastores* here are of the same order as those whom Jason names *Miastores* but a little later in the same drama, and if therefore among those Avengers, in whose name the murderous oath was sworn, were soon to be numbered those very children whom Medea loved best and yet bound herself to slay most foully.

The second passage occurs in Jason's outburst of fury against Medea when he first learns her crime. 'Tis thine Avenger whom the gods have let light on me; for truly thou didst slay thine own brother at his own hearth, or ever thou didst set foot in Argo's shapely hull[1].' Surely we are meant to understand that the dead Absyrtus is himself the *Alastor*—for one *Alastor* only is named this time, and that too as distinct from the gods (*θεοί*)—and that Jason diverted to himself a portion of the dead man's wrath by wedding the blood-guilty woman. Again then the interpretation of *Alastor* in the same sense in which, only a little later in the same scene, *Miastor* is undoubtedly employed is, if not necessary, yet vastly preferable.

To review here all the passages of Greek Tragedy in which the word may advantageously be so understood, when at the same time no single one of them constitutes a final proof of my view, would be to encumber this enquiry to no purpose; but I may perhaps be permitted to select one instance from a story of blood-guilt other than that of which Medea is the centre.

This shall be from that scene in the *Hercules Furens* in which the hero, sane now and overwhelmed with horror at the ghastly slaughter of his own children which in a moment of sudden madness he had wrought, receives from Theseus some measure of consolation and advice. Early in that colloquy, ere yet Theseus has had time to soothe the sufferings or to guide the course of his stricken friend, Heracles cries to him in bitterness of soul,

> Theseus, hast view'd my triumph o'er my children?

and Theseus answers with gentle simplicity,

> I heard, and now I see the woes thou showst me.

[1] Eur. *Med.* 1333 ff.

And then follow the lines:

ΗΡ. τί δῆτά μου κρᾶτ' ἀνεκάλυψας ἡλίῳ;
ΘΗ. τί δ' οὐ; μιαίνεις θνητὸς ὢν τὰ τῶν θεῶν;
ΗΡ. φεῦγ', ὦ ταλαίπωρ', ἀνόσιον μίασμ' ἐμόν.
ΘΗ. οὐδεὶς ἀλάστωρ τοῖς φίλοις ἐκ τῶν φίλων[1].

*Her.* Why then hast bared my head before the Sun?
*Thes.* Nay, wherefore not? canst thou—mere man—taint godhead?
*Her.* Yet flee thyself, risk not my taint of blood-guilt.
*Thes.* Where love joins, bloodshed to no vengeance moves.

It is the connexion and significance of the last two lines which I wish briefly to discuss. Theseus has used the word 'taint' (*μιαίνεις*), and Heracles at once seizes on it, emphasizes it, and warns his friend to begone lest he be contaminated; and then Theseus answers (to give a literal rendering) 'No Avenger of blood proceeds from them that love against them that love.' What does this mean? The line is often translated as if Theseus meant, 'No, I will stay, for though an Avenger of blood may probably pursue you, Heracles, I have no fear that he will touch me who love you as a friend[2].' A generous and sympathetic utterance indeed! And how consistent with that fine burst of feeling with which he had but a moment before refused to be warned away:

'Why warn'st thou me of blood with hand uplift?
In fear lest I be tainted by thy speech?
Nought reck I of ill fortune at thy side
Where once 'twas good; that hour must draw my heart
When thou didst bring me safe from death to light;
Nay, I hate friends whose gratitude grows old,
I hate the man that will enjoy good hap
But will not face foul weather with his friend[3].'

Is this the man whose words, spoken but a moment later, shall be interpreted to mean, 'I will not run away, because the danger that threatens my friend cannot hurt me'? The thought is deeper, more generous, than that. Theseus is thinking not of himself, but of his friend. It is the word 'pollution,' used first by himself and caught up by Heracles, which arrests his attention. Was his friend 'polluted' by a deed of blood, wrought in madness, expiated in tears? Polluted? Yes, in the sense that religious purification was required[4]. He cannot deny the pollution. But

[1] Eur. *H. F.* 1229 ff.
[2] Cf. Paley, in his note to elucidate this dialogue. It should be added however that in a second note on the same page, dealing with this line only, he apparently contradicts his previous explanation.
[3] Eur. *H. F.* 1218 ff.
[4] Cf. 1324.

could the deed also be punished as the murder of close kinsfolk was wont to be punished? Could the children, albeit slain by their own father's hand, desire revenge upon him who loved them and was loved of them? 'No,' he answers boldly, 'pollution (*μίασμα*) there is, but no *Alastor*, no Avenger of blood, can come from them that love against them that love.' How then does Theseus picture the *Alastor* who, but for the bond of love between the father and his dead children, would seek vengeance for their death? The phrase which he uses is ambiguous—perhaps deliberately ambiguous—*οὐδεὶς ... ἐκ τῶν φίλων*. It may mean equally well 'no one of those who love' or 'no one coming from those who love.' But when the close correspondence of *μίασμα*, 'pollution,' and *ἀλάστωρ*, 'avenger,' is noted in this passage, and when it is also remembered that the dead children of Medea are elsewhere plainly named *Miastores*, it is hard to suppose that an audience familiar with the belief that the dead themselves avenged their own wrongs would not have interpreted the ambiguous phrase to mean 'none of these children shall rise up from the grave as an *Alastor*, for love is stronger than vengeance.'

But such doubt as still remains is set at rest when we turn from the usage of the word *Alastor* to its origin and enquire how it obtained the sense of 'Avenger.' What is its derivation?

Two conjectures seem to have been made by the ancients and are recorded by early commentators and lexicographers[1]. The one connects the word with the root of *λανθάνω*, 'I escape notice,' and extracts a meaning in a variety of ways, leaving it open to choice, for example, whether it shall mean a god whose notice nothing escapes or a man who commits acts which cannot escape some god's notice. The other conjecture refers the word to the root of *ἀλάομαι*, 'I wander.' It is between these two proposed derivations that our choice lies; nor can we obtain much help from the greatest modern authorities. Curtius[2] unhesitatingly adopts the latter, Brugmann[3] the former, nor does either of them so much as mention the possibility of the alternative. I must therefore discuss the question without reference to these authorities, knowing that, if I run counter to the one, I have the countenance of the other.

[1] See Eustath. on *Il.* IV. 295.
[2] *Gk Etymol.* 547.
[3] *Vergleichende Grammatik*, II. § 122.

Is then *ἀλάστωρ*, in the sense of a 'non-forgetter,' a possible formation from the root of *λανθάνω*? My own answer to that question is a decided negative, and my reasons are as follows. Substantives denoting the agent and formed with the suffix *-τωρ* (*-τορ-*) can only be so formed direct from a verb-stem, as *ῥήτωρ* from *ϝρε* or *ϝερ* appearing in *ἐρῶ* etc., *μήστωρ* from the stem of *μήδομαι*, *ἀφήτωρ* answering to the verb *ἀφίημι*, *ἐπιβήτωρ* to *ἐπιβαίνω*. It is among these and other such examples that Brugmann places the anomalous *ἀλάστωρ*, to be connected with *ἄλαστος*, *λήθω*. But evidently, in order that *ἀλάστωρ* may be parallel, let us say, to *ἀφήτωρ*, we must postulate the existence of an impossible verb *ἀ-λήθω* or *ἀ-λανθάνομαι*, 'I non-forget.' Nor would it mend matters to suppose, first, the formation, direct from *λήθω*, of a *nomen agentis* of the form *λάστωρ*, a 'forgetter'; for the privative *ἀ-* appears only in adjectives and adverbs and in such verbs and substantives as are formed directly from them, as *ἀμνημονεῖν* from *ἀμνήμων* etc., and cannot be prefixed at pleasure to a substantive or verb not so formed; *ἀλάστωρ* could no more be formed from an hypothetical substantive *λάστωρ*[1], than could an hypothetical verb *ἀ-λανθάνεσθαι* be formed from *λανθάνεσθαι*. Etymologically then the derivation of *ἀλάστωρ* from *ἀ-* privative and the root of *λήθω* is impossible, and its sense of 'Avenger' was not developed from the meaning 'one who does not forget.'

On the other hand, to the connexion of *ἀλάστωρ* with the verb *ἀλᾶσθαι*, 'to wander,' no exception can be taken. Not only is the formation simple, but an exact parallel is forthcoming. As the substantive *μιάστωρ* stands to the verb *μιαίνω*, so does the substantive *ἀλάστωρ* stand to a by-form of *ἀλάομαι*, which is fairly frequent in Tragedy, *ἀλαίνω*[2]. It follows then that *ἀλάστωρ* meant originally a 'wanderer.'

But, when once that primary meaning is discovered, there can be no further doubt as to the primary application of the term. Of the three possible exactors of vengeance—the *revenant* himself, some demonic agent, and the nearest kinsman—the first alone

[1] The nearest parallel could only be the dubious form *ἀδώτης* in Hesiod, *W. and D.*, 353. But that form, if correct, is probably best treated as adjective (gift-less) not as substantive (non-giver).

[2] I am indebted to Mr P. Giles, of Emmanuel College, for pointing out to me that the analogy with *μιάστωρ* is mentioned in the last edition of Meyer's *Griechische Philologie*.

could be aptly described as a 'wanderer'; moreover we know that the murdered man was actually so conceived, and that, among the punishments by which he sought to make his murderer suffer the same lot as he himself endured, one of the most conspicuous was the punishment of wandering and exile. The name *Alastor* therefore, like *Miastor*, denoted first of all the dead man himself, and was only secondarily extended to human or divine agents seeking vengeance on his behalf.

It remains only to enquire how the meaning 'Avenger' was evolved from the meaning 'Wanderer,' and so completely superseded it that the name *Alastores* was extended to those agents who were in no obvious sense 'Wanderers' but simply 'Avengers.'

The first occurrence of the word is in the *Iliad*, as the proper name of a Greek warrior[1]. This fact tends to show that the word had as yet acquired none of that ill-omened sense which it undoubtedly bears in Greek Tragedy. It was used rather, we may believe, in its original and literal sense of 'wanderer,' and the adoption of such a word as a proper name is entirely consistent with the principles of Homeric nomenclature. Hector, Nestor, Mēstor, are famous names of the same class.

Otherwise than as a proper name the word is not used in Homer, nor does it occur at all again, so far as I am aware, before the time of Aeschylus. It is during this interval then that the evolution of meaning must have taken place; for by the age of Aeschylus the idea of vengeance—and vengeance of a horrible kind—had become the ordinary signification of the word. My view then is that the intervening centuries had witnessed a gradual differentiation of the several words which alike originally meant a 'wanderer,' a differentiation such that *ἀλήτης* remained the ordinary and general term, while *ἀλάστωρ* was little by little restricted to the wanderer from the dead, the *revenant*; and that subsequently from meaning a *revenant* of any and every kind it became limited to that single class of *revenants* whose wanderings

[1] Hom. *Il.* IV. 295, Ἀμφὶ μέγαν Πελάγοντα, Ἀλάστορά τε, Χρόμιόν τε. The hiatus in the third foot has been made the basis of a suggestion, to which Mr P. Giles has kindly called my attention, that *ἀλάστωρ* should begin with a digamma. There is however no need for the supposition, since hiatus after the trochaic caesura is not infrequent (e.g. *Il.* I. 569) and some license is generally allowed in any case in the metrical treatment of proper names; moreover, in *Il.* VIII. 333, we have a line ending δῖος Ἀλάστωρ which makes against the original existence of a digamma in the word.

were guided by the desire for revenge—the class to whom the name *Miastores* had always belonged.

Some evidence for the first stage in this development of meaning is furnished by the Tragic usage of the verb from which the substantive is derived; for in both its forms, *ἀλᾶσθαι* and *ἀλαίνειν*, it continued to be applied to any of the restless dead, when the substantive *ἀλάστωρ*, as I conceive, had come to be appropriated to the Avenger only. Indeed it might almost be thought that both Aeschylus and Euripides had an inkling of the derivation and earlier meaning of the substantive; for while idiom debarred them from using *ἀλάστωρ* in the large sense of any *revenant*, they certainly used the corresponding verb in contexts which suggest that those who thus 'wander' were not imagined by them as vague impalpable ghosts, but possessed for them rather the real substance and physical traits of a *revenant*. Thus in the *Eumenides*, though Clytemnestra could not be permitted to play the part of a *revenant* and appears only as a ghost, yet the more gross and popular conception of her is clearly present to the poet's mind. Though a ghost, she points to the wounds which her son's hands inflicted[1]; though a ghost, she is made to exhort the Erinyes to vengeance 'on behalf of her very soul' (*τῆς ἐμῆς πέρι ψυχῆς*)[2]. Strange gestures and strange language indeed, if the so-called ghost had been conceived as a mere disembodied soul! But the popular conception of the *revenant* penetrated even here. And was it not the same conception which suggested the phrase *αἰσχρῶς ἀλῶμαι*, 'I wander in dishonour[3]'? In the popular belief, as we know, the murderer was bound to wander after death, suffering as he had wrought; and it is as a murderess[4] that Clytemnestra avows herself condemned to shameful wanderings. 'To wander,' *ἀλᾶσθαι*, sums up the suffering which the murderer, like his victim, must incur after death. It is likely then that the name *ἀλάστωρ* too was originally applied to any 'wanderer'—whether murderer or murdered—before it acquired the connotation of vindictiveness and so became appropriated to the latter only.

Again Euripides uses the same verb of one whose body has

[1] Aesch. *Eum.* 103. [2] Aesch. *Eum.* 114. [3] Aesch. *Eum.* 98.
[4] This is distinctly stated in the passage, though of course her own violent death might equally well have been given as a cause of 'wandering.'

not received burial. This time there is no connexion with blood-guilt at all, but the lines are simply the plaint of captive wife for husband slain in battle: 'oh beloved, oh husband mine, dead art thou and wanderest unburied, unwatered with tears'—*σὺ μὲν φθίμενος ἀλαίνεις, ἄθαπτος, ἄνυδρος*[1]. 'To wander unburied'—could there be a simpler description of a *revenant*? Does not the whole misery of the unburied dead consist in this—that they must wander? It is almost inconceivable then that the name *Alastor*, 'wanderer,' should have been originally applied only to a single class of the wandering dead—to those whose wanderings were directed towards vengeance, and not also to those whose wanderings were more aimless, more pitiable, whose whole existence might have been summed up in that one word 'wandering.' At some time then between the age of Homer and that of Aeschylus *Alastor*, I hold, meant simply *revenant*.

How then shall we explain that caprice of language which, according to this Tragic usage, permitted all the unhappy dead to be said 'to wander' (*ἀλᾶσθαι, ἀλαίνειν*), but apparently forbade them to be collectively named 'wanderers' (*ἀλάστορες*)? How did *Alastor* acquire its sense of 'Avenger' and become restricted to one class of *revenant* only?

It might be sufficient answer to point out that those *revenants* who were bent on avenging their own wrongs are likely always to have occupied a prominent place in popular superstition simply because they inspired most terror in the popular mind; other *revenants* were harmless, and, as harmless, liable to be little regarded and seldom named; and the most conspicuous class might thus have appropriated to itself the name which properly belonged to all. But there is another influence which, if it did not cause, may at least have facilitated and quickened the change—the influence of the word *ἄλαστος*, 'unforgotten,' which, as I have noted above, was commonly and naturally, in an age when etymology was not science but guess-work, connected with *ἀλάστωρ*. Etymologically the two words have nothing in common; but that is no obstacle to the supposition that, in their usage, their casual but close similarity of form rendered the meaning of the one susceptible to the influence of the other. Nay more, the fact that the two words, it matters not how erroneously, were actually

[1] Eur. *Tro.* 1023.

in early times referred to a common origin[1] warrants the suggestion that such influence had been exercised. Now ἄλαστος always remained in meaning true to its derivation. Itself employed in the passive sense, 'unforgotten,' it seems to have made over the active meaning, 'unforgetting,' 'vindictive' (which, on the analogy of ἄπρακτος and a score of similar forms, it should naturally have possessed), to the apparently kindred word ἀλάστωρ. This adventitious meaning accorded well with the popular conception of the most conspicuous class of 'wanderers' from the grave—those whose wanderings had a vindictive aim; and thus, by the help of the accidental resemblance of two words, it seems to have come to pass that the term *Alastores* ceased to be applicable to all kinds of *revenants* and denoted only the 'Avengers.' At this point it became in fact synonymous with *Miastores*, and, like that word, enlarged its scope so as to denote not only the prime Avenger, the *revenant* himself, but also any divine or human agents employed by him as subsidiary Avengers.

So much then for the first meaning which the lexicons attach to the words *Alastor* and *Miastor*; the second interpretation of them, in relation to a blood-guilty man, may be more briefly treated. *Alastor* in this passive sense is alleged to mean a man who suffers from the vengeance of one who is an *Alastor* in the active sense; and *Miastor* to mean a man who is himself polluted and therefore pollutes those with whom he associates.

As regards *Alastor*, this explanation stands already condemned by the fact that it pre-supposes the derivation from λανθάνομαι, and even then it does fresh and incredible violence to language; a sane philologist may commit the error of deriving ἀλάστωρ from λανθάνομαι and making it mean 'one who does not forget'; but only the maddest could dream of interpreting it as 'one who does deeds which others do not forget.' But, if in spite of this we trouble to turn up the references which the lexicons give under this heading, it is obvious at once that there is no more support for such a meaning in idiomatic usage than in etymological origin. Three references are cited. The first is to that passage of the *Eumenides* in which Orestes declares himself ἀλάστορα, οὐ προστρόπαιον[2], a phrase which means, as I have already shown, 'an

[1] Cf. Plutarch, *de defect. orac.*, cap. 15 (p. 418)
[2] Aesch. *Eum.* 236, cf. above, p. 466.

avenger, not a murderer.' This then should be classified as an example of the active, not of the hypothetical passive, meaning of *Alastor*. Of the other two passages, one is from the *Ajax* of Sophocles, where the hero in his anger and despair speaks of the guileful enemies who robbed him of his prize as *Alastores*[1], and the other a passage from Demosthenes in which he criticizes Aeschines for applying the word as an opprobrious name to Philip of Macedon[2]. But in what possible sense could either Ajax' enemies or Philip of Macedon be described as 'suffering from Avengers'? On the contrary, at the times when the word *Alastor* was applied to them, their success should surely have suggested that they were favoured by heaven, and their opponents rather were the sufferers. What then was the meaning of the word thus opprobriously employed? A meaning, I answer, very little removed from that of 'Avenger' and arising out of it. For how was the Avenger—be he the *revenant* himself or a demon acting on his behalf—constantly pictured? Was it not as a fiend tormenting with every torment the object of his wrath, plaguing him, maddening him, sucking his very blood? Little wonder then if the justice of that vengeance was sometimes obscured in men's minds by their horror of it, and if the word *Alastor* suggested to them a fiend, a merciless tormentor. In that sense Ajax might well apply the name to his enemies, and Aeschines to Philip. Nor are other instances of it lacking. Demosthenes himself, for all his criticism of Aeschines' vulgarity in calling Philip *βάρβαρόν τε καὶ ἀλάστορα*, 'a foreign devil,' used the same word of Aeschines and his friends[3]; again, in Sophocles, the lion of Nemea for the loss and havoc that he inflicted is unique among beasts that perish in having merited the same sorry title—*βουκόλων ἀλάστωρ*, the 'herdsmen's Tormentor[4]'; and indeed, apart from living men and animals, there are many instances in Tragedy[5] in which the word *Alastor*, applied to some supernatural foe, *revenant* or demon, may be more appropriately rendered by 'fiend' or 'tormentor' than by 'avenger.'

And the same thing is true, I hold, of the word *Miastor*. The theory of the lexicons, namely, that the word denotes a polluted

[1] Soph. *Ajax*, 373. [2] Demosth. *de Falsa Legat.*, p. 438, 28.
[3] Demosth. *de Corona*, § 296, p. 324. [4] Soph. *Trach.* 1092.
[5] e.g. Eur. *Iph. in Aul.* 878; *Phoen.* 1550; *El.* 979; *Or.* 1668.

and blood-guilty man because such an one is inevitably a 'polluter' of others, is certainly not intrinsically bad; for it recognises the primary meaning of the word, 'polluter,' and bases the secondary meaning 'polluted' upon a right understanding of the old belief that pollution was contagious. But at the same time it gives some occasion to wonder why the word should have been diverted from its most natural meaning in order to denote that which the cognate word μιαρός already expressed more simply. Moreover, when examination is made of those passages which are claimed as examples of such an usage, the theory becomes wholly unnecessary. The two most specious examples are two passages from Aeschylus[1] and Euripides[2], in both of which the persons called *Miastores* are Aegisthus and Clytemnestra. Now the authors of Agamemnon's death were certainly polluted, and might with justice have been called μιαροί—that is admitted. But because they might have been called μιαροί and actually are called μιάστορες, it does not follow that, though the words have the same root, they also bear the same meaning. Obviously the word 'fiends,' if μιάστορες ever has that sense, would be an equally apt description of the murderous pair. The choice therefore between these two renderings here must be guided by more certain examples of usage elsewhere.

Two may be selected as eminently clear. In one Orestes calls Helen τὴν Ἑλλάδος μιάστορα[3], where the word cannot mean a 'polluted wretch,' for the construction postulates an active meaning in *Miastor*; nor yet can the phrase be intelligibly rendered 'the polluter of Greece,' for there was no pollution involved in the warfare which Helen had caused; clearly Orestes means 'the tormentor of Greece,' the fiend who had proved the bane of ships and men and cities. In the other passage Peleus applies the word to Menelaus: 'I look upon thee,' he says, 'as on the murderer—the fiend-like destroyer (μιάστορ' ὥς τινα)—of Achilles[4].' Here again *Miastor* clearly bears an active sense, and at the same time cannot be rendered 'polluter.' Menelaus had brought upon Achilles not pollution but death, and the word *Miastor* explains the word 'murderer' (αὐθέντην) which precedes it—explains that the murder laid to Menelaus' charge was not

[1] *Choeph.* 928. [2] *Electra*, 677. [3] Eur. *Or.* 1584.
[4] Eur. *Andr.* 614.

the open violence of a stronger foe, but resembled the death-dealing of some lurking fiend. In these two passages then the interpretation of *Miastor* in the sense of 'fiend,' 'tormentor,' 'destroyer,' is necessary and proven; and, this being known, common reason bids us read more ambiguous scriptures in the light thus obtained. There is therefore no call to suppose that μιάστωρ ever meant 'polluted'; from the active meaning 'Avenger' it developed, like *Alastor*, the broader sense of 'Tormentor' or 'Fiendish Destroyer'; and these meanings completely satisfy the conditions of Tragic and other usage of the words.

There remains the word προστρόπαιος, to which the lexicons, I admit, rightly ascribe a twofold meaning. It is clearly used both of the Avenger of blood and also of the blood-guilty person who is seeking purification. But as regards both the means by which the first signification was obtained, and the primary application of the word in that signification, I join issue. The second meaning is more satisfactorily explained, and my criticism of it will not go beyond an alternative suggestion.

The lexicons elucidate the first meaning as follows: *he to whom one turns*, especially with supplications, θεός or δαίμων προστρόπαιος the god *to whom the murdered person turns* for vengeance, hence *an avenger*, like ἀλάστωρ...hence also of the *manes* of murdered persons, *visiting with vengeance, implacable.*

The objections to this explanation are obvious. It may well be questioned whether προστρόπαιος is at all likely to have had any passive meaning—as it were a person who 'is turned to'—when the verb προστρέπω itself was, so far as I can ascertain, never so used; and further, if a god had really been called προστρόπαιος because the murdered man turned for vengeance to him, the extension of the term to the *manes* of murdered persons must imply a conception of the murdered man turning for vengeance towards—himself. This is not a little cumbrous; and for my part I deny the existence of any passive sense of προστρόπαιος.

I do however find two senses of the word, the one active, corresponding to the transitive use of the verb προστρέπειν or προστρέπεσθαι (for the middle as well as the active voice might be used transitively, as will shortly appear), the other middle, corresponding to the ordinary usage of the middle προστρέπεσθαι. Thus the active meaning of προστρόπαιος will be *turning* some-

thing *towards* or *against* someone; the middle meaning, *turning oneself towards* someone.

The active usage is best illustrated by a passage of Aeschines, in which he accuses Demosthenes of wilful perjury in calumniating him, and then appeals to the jury in these words—*ἐάσετε οὖν τὸν τοιοῦτον αὑτοῦ προστρόπαιον (μὴ γὰρ δὴ τῆς πόλεως) ἐν ὑμῖν ἀναστρέφεσθαι*[1]; 'Will you then allow this perjurer, who has turned upon his own head (for I pray that it be not on the city) the anger of the gods in whose name he swore, to continue in your midst?' Here the very brevity of the Greek, which I am compelled to expand in translation, proves that Aeschines' audience were perfectly familiar with an active meaning of *προστρόπαιος* with an evil connotation, 'turning some misfortune or punishment or vengeance upon someone.'

The middle sense of *προστρόπαιος* is equally clearly exhibited by Aeschylus, who in telling the story of Thyestes says that after his banishment by his brother Atreus he came again *προστρόπαιος ἑστίας*[2], 'turning himself (as a suppliant) towards the hearth' of his father's home, so that his own life at least was spared out of respect for the place.

Thus the two meanings of the word are established, and it remains only to show how they were specially used in connexion with blood-guilt.

In the active sense *προστρόπαιος* was primarily applied, I hold, like *Miastor* and *Alastor*, to the murdered man himself, who 'turned' his wrath 'against' the murderer, or, if it so happened, against the next of kin who had failed in his duty of bringing the murderer to justice. It is precisely thus that Plato uses the verb *προστρέπεσθαι* in recording the old tradition in which he apparently reposed so much faith as to base his own laws upon it. 'If the nearest of kin,' so runs the passage, 'do not seek vengeance for the deed, it is held that the pollution devolves upon him, and that *the sufferer* (i.e. the dead man) *turns upon him the suffering* (i.e. that which the homicide himself should have incurred), and anyone who will may bring a suit against him, etc.[3]' The words which I have italicised are in the

[1] Aeschines, *De falsa legatione*, § 168 (p. 49). Cf. § 162 (p. 48).
[2] Aeschylus, *Agam.* 1587.
[3] Plato, *Leges*, IX. p. 866 B, cf. above, p. 445.

Greek τοῦ παθόντος προστρεπομένου τὴν πάθην, where the middle presumably was preferred to the active because the sufferings which the dead man inflicts are, as we already know and as the language of the particular phrase itself suggests, exactly those which he himself suffers. This usage of the verb, though it is distinctly rare and probably a technicality of religion or law, is so perfectly clear in this one example[1], that there should be no hesitation about understanding the cognate word προστρόπαιος in the same sense. And indeed one lexicographer, Photius, shows that he did so understand it; for he tells us that Zeus was sometimes invoked under this title, as turning against murderers the pollution (including perhaps the punishments) of their crime: Ζεὺς...προστρόπαιος, ὁ προστρέπων τὸ ἄγος αὐτοῖς (sc. τοῖς παλαμναίοις)[2]—such are his actual words, and this time of course the verb is rightly in the active, for Zeus is in no way personally concerned but acts only in the interests of the dead man. Clearly then it was in virtue of this active meaning that προστρόπαιος came to be practically a synonym of *Miastor* and *Alastor* in the sense of an Avenger of blood.

Once more then we return to the same question which has been propounded and answered with regard to those two other names—to whom was the term προστρόπαιος primarily applied?

I find the application of it more restricted than that of the other two words. It was used of the dead man himself, and it was used of demons avenging his cause; but it was never used[3] of the next of kin in the character of avenger—and that for the very good reason that when the word was applied to a living man it

[1] So far as I can discover, it is a solitary example of the use in Classical Greek; but I very strongly suspect that in Antiphon, p. 127 (init.), προστρέψομαι should be read instead of προστρίψομαι. A man accused of murder is saying, ἀδίκως μὲν γὰρ ἀπολυθείς, διὰ τὸ μὴ ὀρθῶς διδαχθῆναι ὑμᾶς ἀποφυγών, τοῦ μὴ διδάξαντος καὶ οὐχ ὑμέτερον τὸν προστρόπαιον τοῦ ἀποθανόντος καταστήσω· μὴ ὀρθῶς δὲ καταληφθεὶς ὑφ' ὑμῶν, ὑμῖν καὶ οὐ τούτῳ τὸ μήνιμα τῶν ἀλιτηρίων προστρίψομαι. The sense is, 'If I were really guilty of this murder and yet owing to the feeble case presented by the prosecutor I were acquitted by you, my escape would bring the Avenger of the dead man upon the prosecutor and not on you; whereas, if you condemn me wrongly when I am innocent, it will be on you and not on him that I, after death, shall turn the wrath of the Avengers.' Clearly προστρέψομαι is required to answer προστρόπαιον, and it could have no more natural object than τὸ μήνιμα, the special word denoting the wrath which follows on bloodguilt.

[2] Photius, s.v. παλαμναῖος.

[3] I venture upon this emphatic negation, not so much because I have found no such usage in my reading of Greek literature, as because the line of the *Eumenides* in which Orestes calls himself ἀλάστορα, οὐ προστρόπαιον, would be hopelessly ambiguous if such an usage had been possible.

bore an entirely different meaning, which has yet to be discussed, the meaning of 'blood-guilty.'

A few examples of each usage must be given. Both Antiphon and Aeschylus apply the word to murdered men; Antiphon, in a speech in which the kinsman, who has, as in duty bound, undertaken the prosecution of the murderer, claims that, if the jury wrongfully acquit, the dead man will not become προστρόπαιος, an Avenger, against his kinsmen who have done their best in his service, but will visit his anger on the jury for condoning and thereby sharing the blood-guilt[1]; Aeschylus, in that list of penalties which has been discussed, when he depicts the 'madness and vain terror,' which will befall Orestes if he fail in his task, as an arrow that flieth in darkness sped by powers of hell 'at the behest of fallen kindred that turn their vengeance upon him' (ἐκ προστροπαίων ἐν γένει πεπτωκότων[2]). But equally clearly in other passages the Avenger indicated is not the murdered man, but some divine being. Antiphon again is an authority for this usage. Twice, in a context similar to that which has just been noticed, he speaks not of the murdered man himself becoming an Avenger, but of certain divine powers—whom he also calls ἀλιτήριοι, the powers that deal with sin—acting as Avengers (προστρόπαιοι) of the dead[3]. And similarly in later time Pausanias also speaks of 'the pollution (μίασμα) incurred by Pelops and of the Avenger (προστρόπαιος) of Myrtilus[4].'

Since then there is no question but that the word προστρόπαιος was actually applied both to dead men and to gods, to which of the two did it refer primarily? We already know the answer. The dead man himself, as a *revenant*, was the prime and proper Avenger of his own wrongs; demons of vengeance acted only in his name, as his subordinates and agents. To him therefore the name primarily belonged. And even if we had not already learnt this from other sources, the passage of Aeschylus, to which I have just referred, might well guide us to the same conclusion. The arrow that flieth in darkness is sped indeed, he says, 'by powers of hell' (τῶν ἐνερτέρων)—the demonic agents of the dead—but 'at the behest of fallen kindred.' The activity both of the principal and of the agent is recognised in the same

[1] Antiphon, 119. 6.
[2] Aesch. *Choeph.* 287.
[3] Antiphon, 125. 32 and 126. 39.
[4] Pausan. II. 18. 2.

passage, and either might have been called προστρόπαιος: but, because the activity of both was plainly asserted, Aeschylus reserved the name for the one to whom it primarily belonged, the murdered man, who turns his wrath, who turns indeed those powers of hell who execute his wrath, against his enemies.

There now remains for consideration only the second meaning of προστρόπαιος; how could a word, which in reference to dead men or to deities meant 'an Avenger of blood,' bear, in relation to living men, the sense of 'blood-guilty'? Very likely the dictionaries are right in accepting the explanation of this use which Hesychius[1] and others give. We have seen one case[2] in which the word clearly has a middle sense 'turning oneself towards' a place or a person in supplication; and there is no difficulty in supposing that the word was used technically in the same sense of a blood-guilty man who turned to some god or to some sanctuary in quest of purification. This, I say, is very probably the right explanation. But I may perhaps offer an alternative explanation which I do not count preferable but merely possible. The active meaning of προστρόπαιος, 'turning something upon someone,' might conceivably have produced this sense of 'blood-guilty' as well as the other sense 'an Avenger of blood.' As the dead man was held to turn something, namely his wrath, against his enemy, so might the murderer have been pictured as trying to turn something, namely the pollution which he had incurred, upon some object and so to cleanse himself therefrom. Now the chief feature in the Delphic ceremony of purification was the slaying of a sucking-pig[3]. This may of course have been merely a propitiatory sacrifice; but it is possible also that the animal was really a surrogate victim for the murderer himself, that by laying his polluted hand on its head he transferred the religious uncleanness from himself to it, and that, by the subsequent slaughter of the now blood-guilty animal, he vicariously satisfied the old law that blood could only be washed out by blood. This is only a conjecture, and I leave others to judge of its probability; but, if the ceremony had followed the lines which I have suggested, it is easily intelligible that, in the technical language of religion, the

[1] Hesychius, s.v. προστρόπαιος. [2] Aesch. *Agam.* 1587; see above, p. 480.
[3] Cf. Aesch. *Eum.* 283 and 450.

murderer who sought to turn his own pollution upon the victim might have been called προστρόπαιος.

Thus then the problem of the ancient nomenclature of *revenants* is solved, and the results are briefly these: all *revenants* were originally called ἀλάστορες, 'Wanderers'; but subsequently that name was restricted only to the vengeful class of *revenants*, to which the names μιάστορες and προστρόπαιοι had always belonged; and for the more harmless and purely pitiable *revenants* no name remained, but men said of such an one simply, 'He wanders.'

# CHAPTER V.

## CREMATION AND INHUMATION.

The discussion of those abnormal cases of after-death existence, to which the last chapter has been devoted, has disclosed to us the fact that in all ages of Greece the condition most to be dreaded by the dead has been incorruptibility and the boon most to be desired a sure and quick dissolution; and that of the two methods by which the living might promote the disintegration of the dead, cremation and inhumation, the former alone has been accounted infallible. What benefit in the future existence was in old time thought to accrue to those whose bodies had been duly dissolved, and to be withheld from *revenants*, is a question which may conveniently be adjourned for a while. First we must verify the results obtained from the study of the abnormal by consideration of the normal; we must see whether ordinary funeral usage has had for its sole object the dissolution of the dead in the interests of the dead; and what, if any, distinction has been made between inhumation and cremation as a means of securing that object.

Now diverse methods of disposing of the dead, especially among a primitive folk, would naturally suggest diverse religious purposes to be served thereby, diverse conceptions of the future estate of the dead, or of their future abode, or of their future relations with the living; and for my part I do not doubt that, if our eyes could pierce the darkness of a long distant past which neither history nor even archaeology has illumined, we should see that the peoples who first used cremation and inhumation side by side in Greece were in so doing animated by diverse religious sentiments. But I hold also that in no period of which we have any cognisance have the Greeks regarded inhumation

and cremation as means to different religious ends; but that, whichever funeral-method has been employed, one and the same immediate object has always been kept in view, the dissolution of the dead body, and one and the same motive (save in the quite exceptional circumstances where a scare of *vrykolakes* has temporarily arisen) has always prompted the mourners thereto, the motive of benefiting the dead.

But, while the object in view was single and constant, there would have been no inconsistency in making a certain distinction between the two methods available. On the contrary, if the sole object was the disintegration of the dead body, the surer and quicker means of attaining it should logically have been preferred. Cremation therefore might legitimately have been reckoned a superior rite to inhumation; for it cannot but have been recognised that the disintegration of the body is more rapidly and unfailingly effected by the action of fire than by the action of the soil.

It is true indeed that the solvent action of the earth upon the buried body—even with all due allowance for the absence of any coffin in many cases—is popularly regarded as far more rapid than it can actually be. The period usually reckoned by the common-folk as the limit of time requisite for complete dissolution is forty days. This is stated clearly enough in a few lines of a song of lamentation heard in Zacynthos:

> *καὶ μέσ' 'στὸ σαραντοήμερο ἁρμοὺς ἁρμοὺς χωρίζουν,*
> *πέφτουνε τὰ ξανθὰ μαλλιὰ, βγαίνουν τὰ μαῦρα μάτια,*
> *καὶ χώρια πάει τὸ κορμὶ καὶ χώρια τὸ κεφάλι*[1].

'And within the forty days, they (the dead) are severed joint from joint, their bright hair falls away, their dark eyes fall out, and asunder go trunk and head.'

The Zacynthian muse is horribly explicit; its utterances need no interpreter; itself rather gives the true interpretation of certain customs which are wide-spread in modern Greece and appear to date from pre-Christian days.

The fortieth day after death is almost universally observed in Greece as one on which the relations of the deceased should provide a memorial feast. There are indeed other fixed days for the like commemoration and 'forgiveness[2]' of the dead, but these

[1] Bern. Schmidt, *Lieder, Märchen, Sagen etc.*, Folk-song no. 33.
[2] Cf. above, p. 389.

all fall at periods of three, or a multiple of three, days, weeks, months, or years, from the date of death. These, I think, have been selected in deference to the mysterious virtue of the number three[1], and not improbably multiplied by the importunities of a penurious priesthood, to whom some half-dozen hearty meals in the course of the year do not appear an inappropriate remuneration for their services at death-bed and burial. But the fortieth day was originally devoted to this purpose, it may reasonably be supposed, because it was the last opportunity of setting before the dead man's neighbours and acquaintances savoury meat such as their soul loved, that they might eat thereof and 'loose' the dead man from any curse wherewith in his lifetime they had bound him; if dissolution was not to be retarded, the fortieth day was in popular reckoning the last opportunity for absolution.

From this it should follow that any memorial feasts held later[2] than the fortieth day are of purely ecclesiastical contrivance; and the correctness of this inference is attested by a curious local usage which clearly distinguishes the popular and the ecclesiastical feasts. At Sinasos in Asia Minor two classes of commemorations are recognised. The one is called *κανίσκια*, 'little baskets,' from the method in which food is distributed to the poor; this is held on the fortieth day. The other has usurped the name *μνημόσυνα*, which commonly belongs to all memorial-feasts, and is held on the three anniversaries of the death (for, after the third, exhumation generally takes place, and no further memorial-feasts are needed) and consists in the presentation of an ornamental dish of boiled wheat (*κόλλυβα*) at the church and the reading of a service[3]. In other words, the fortieth day is the popular festival, and the observances of later dates are ecclesiastical. Clearly the reason for this distinction must lie in the fact that the common-folk believe, as the song from Zacynthos shows, that dissolution is normally complete by the fortieth day, while the Church has prudently fixed the date, after which exhumation is permissible, at the end of the third year. Presumably then a period of forty days was the old pagan period, for which the Church has tried, with partial success, to substitute three years.

[1] See above, p. 307, note 1, and p. 313.

[2] The feasts at earlier dates, as on the third and ninth days, will be shown later to be popular in origin. See below, pp. 530 ff.

[3] Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, *ἡ Σινασός*, p. 82.

Several other small pieces of evidence point to the wide distribution of this popular notion. In Sinasos[1], once more, and also in Patmos[2], the fees paid to the priests for memorial services derive their name from the word 'forty' (*σαράντα*), as if the fortieth day were the limit; after that date, apparently, though my authorities are not explicit on the point, the priests have for their remuneration only the dish of boiled wheat or other presents in kind. In Crete, if a dead man is suspected of turning *vrykolakas* soon after his death, the people are anxious to deal with him before he enters upon his second period of forty days[3]; for then all hope of natural dissolution is past, and he becomes as it were a confirmed vampire. In Scyros, the old custom of burning such corpses as were found on exhumation at the end of three years (or, in case of a panic, earlier) to be still whole, and were therefore suspected of vampire-like proclivities, has been replaced by the milder expedient of carrying the body round to forty churches in turn and then re-interring it, in the hope, as it seems, that each of the forty saints, whose sanctuaries have been honoured with a visit and a certain consumption of candles, will in return take a proportionate share in 'loosing' the suppliant dead—or, it may be, in the more mathematical expectation that the work effected in cases of ordinary burial by one funeral-service in forty days, will be achieved by forty funeral-services in one day. Whichever be the calculation on which the practice has been based, the number of churches to be visited is clearly governed by the number of days requisite, in popular belief, for ordinary dissolution.

But with all this reputed rapidity of the earth in 'loosing' the dead bodies committed to her care, the action of fire is incontrovertibly more rapid. In hours, not in days, may be counted the period of disintegration on the pyre. And as it is quicker, so also is it far surer. No body that has been burned can wander as a *revenant* over the earth, while for the buried there is no perfect assurance of dissolution. Some curse, some crime, the violence of their death, or the deficiency of their funeral rites, each and all of these may keep their bodies 'bound' and indissoluble.

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 81. The form here is *σαρανταρίκια*.

[2] *Δελτίον τῆς ἱστορ. καὶ ἐθνολ. ἑταιρ. τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, III. p. 337. The form is *σαραντάρια*.

[3] See above, p. 373.

Cremation then is indisputably in theory the preferable means of securing to the dead that boon which they most desire; and I hold that in the practice of the Greek people there are signs that this preference was felt.

There are then two propositions to be established by reference to the actual funeral methods of Ancient and Modern Greece; first, that from the earliest ages of which we have cognisance cremation and inhumation have been identical in their religious purpose; second, that a preference for cremation, considered as a means to the single religious end, has been manifested.

The first thing needful in this twofold investigation is to understand the terms, which are to be used, in the sense in which the Greek understood them. Cremation means to us the consumption of the corpse by fire; inhumation the laying of the corpse out of sight in the earth; and unless one or other of those acts had been really performed, we should not consider that a funeral had taken place. But the Greeks judged rather by the intention than by the act. In certain cases, in which the actual digging of a grave was impossible, ancient usage prescribed a ceremonial substitute. The sprinkling of a handful of dust over a dead body was held to constitute burial. Such was all the funeral that Antigone could give to Polynices[1]; such the minimum of burial enjoined by Attic Law on any who chanced upon a dead body lying unburied[2]; such, according to Aelian, 'the fulfilment of some mysterious law of piety imposed by Nature' not only upon man but even on some of the brute creation, in such sort that the elephant, if he find one of his own kind dead, gathers up some earth in his trunk and sprinkles it over the prostrate carcase[3]. 'The fulfilment of some mysterious law of piety'—Aelian's phrase accurately summarises the Greek view of burial. To us it is a necessary and decent method of disposing of the dead. To the Greeks it was something more—a provision for their dimly discerned welfare; and the intention of the living mattered so much more than the performance, that, in cases where real burial could not be given, a mere ceremony suggestive of burial was considered competent to ensure the same end.

[1] Soph. *Antig.* 256. Cf. Jebb's note *ad loc.*, from which I take the further references.

[2] Aelian, *Var. Hist.* v. 14.

[3] Aelian, *Hist. Anim.* v. 49.

Again in the case of a man drowned at sea or having met his death in any way which precluded the possibility of his body being brought home for burial, a means has always been found for fulfilling 'the mysterious law of piety.' Still, as in old time, the cenotaph serves the same end as the real sepulchre. A lay-figure, dressed if possible in some clothes of the dead man, receives on his behalf the full rite of burial[1]; and if enquiry be made, to what purpose this empty ceremony, the answer is not slow in coming, *γιὰ νὰ λυωθῇ ὁ πεθαμένος*, 'to the end that the dead man may be dissolved'; nor can I doubt that the same formal rite in old time served the same end.

And let no practical-minded critic here interpose the objection that a dead body lying unburied, exposed to sun and rain, must decompose at least as rapidly as one that has been buried; I have myself tried the effect of that criticism on the Greek peasants with instructive results. Once my suggestion was promptly met with a flat and honest denial—the most simple and final of answers, for, be it remembered, it is with the honest beliefs of the peasant, and not with physical facts, that we are dealing. Another time there was a pause, and then came the deliberate answer, *βρωμάει τὸ κορμὶ, δὲν λυώνεται*, 'the corpse becomes putrid, but is not "loosed".' There was a distinction in the peasant's mind between natural decomposition and the dissolution effected by a religious rite. But more often it has been pointed out to me that my apparently reasonable suggestion was really unpractical; a dead body left unburied would never suffer natural decay, but would be a prey to the beasts of the field and the fowls of the air; the vultures circling yonder overhead convicted me of unreason. And the answer could not but recall the threats of Achilles against Hector, or the fears of Antigone for Polynices, that dogs and carrion-birds should feast upon the corpse. So then it is perhaps a logical as well as an honest belief which the Greeks have always held, that dissolution of the body is afforded by one of two rites and by no third means.

Now one of these rites, inhumation, might on occasion be reduced to a mere ceremonial observance, the scattering of a handful of dust over the body, or the interment of an effigy in its

[1] Cf. Fauriel, *Chants de la Grèce Moderne, Discours Préliminaire*, p. 40; Μιχαὴλ Σ. Γρηγορόπουλος, *ἡ νῆσος Σύμη*, p. 46.

stead. Was the other rite, cremation, ever so reduced? Could the roar and crackle of the blazing pyre be ceremonially replaced by a small flame lighted in proximity to the dead body? Did the kindling of a fire, however incapable of consuming the dead body, constitute cremation in the same sense that a handful of earth, incapable of concealing the dead body, constituted interment? *Prima facie* there is nothing wild in the supposition; it is consistent with the Greek conception of the funeral-rite, which looked rather to the intention than to the act; the proven fact of ceremonial inhumation guarantees the likelihood of ceremonial cremation. I take it therefore as a working hypothesis, and base its subsequent claim to be accepted as a fact on its ability to explain consistently a long series of phenomena in Greek funeral usage.

My first proposition, that from the earliest ages of which we have cognisance cremation and inhumation have served the same religious end, would have had an initial obstacle to surmount but for Professor Ridgeway's work on the ethnology of early Greece. Diverse methods of disposing of the dead would at first sight, as I have said, suggest diverse conceptions of after-death existence. But Professor Ridgeway has shown conclusively, to my mind, that inhumation was the rite of the autochthonous Pelasgian people of Greece, and that cremation was introduced by the Achaean immigrants[1]. Now it is improbable of course that these two peoples, when they first came into contact, held similar views concerning the hereafter. But the entry of the Achaean element was, according to all evidence, a long process of infiltration rather than a sudden invasion. The beginnings of it are conjecturally placed well back in the third millennium before Christ[2]. There was ample time therefore, even before the later Mycenaean or the Homeric age, for differences of religious sentiment as between the two races to dwindle or to vanish, while the two rites of cremation and inhumation, with the inveteracy of all custom, still survived.

Thus there is no initial objection to the view that in any period known to us those who used cremation and those who used inhumation were animated by the same religious ideas; and at the same time I am relieved of the necessity of combating both

[1] *Early Age of Greece*, Vol. I. cap. 7. [2] Bury, *History of Greece*, p. 41.

the old theory that cremation was adopted by the Greeks as a convenient substitute for inhumation during some period of migration or nomadic life, and Rohde's more recent theory[1] that fear of the spirits of the dead, which were believed to hover about graves where their bodies lay buried, led men to adopt cremation as a means of annihilating the body and thereby ridding themselves of the unwelcome spirit. Both those theories fail, apart from certain intrinsic defects, because they are attempts to explain a thing which never took place—a supposed substitution of cremation for inhumation between the Mycenaean and the Homeric ages. Professor Ridgeway has shown that the Mycenaean rite was that of the Pelasgians; the Homeric rite that of the Achaeans. It is an accident only that our earliest information respecting the two rites happens to be drawn from different periods of time; the real distinction between the two was a racial distinction; from the age when the Achaeans first entered Greece down to the Christian era cremation and inhumation were both continuously practised.

The positive evidence for my view that these two rites were mere racial survivals, which had already, in the earliest ages known to us, ceased to differ in religious import, is to be found not only in the fact that in historical times, or even earlier, the two rites were used side by side by the people of a single city in the same cemetery, but in an early tendency to fuse the two rites into one and to give to the same body the double treatment of cremation and inhumation combined; for clearly the only condition under which two such rites could be amalgamated must have been that there had ceased to be any conflict of religious significance between them.

How early this fusion began it is difficult to determine; but it is at least worth while to note a point which is apt to be overlooked, that the Homeric funeral-rite comprised inhumation. Cremation certainly was the main part of the rite, the actual means by which the corpse was disintegrated; but the funeral was not complete until the ashes had been collected and inhumed[2]. This is an act of ceremonial inhumation just as much as the burial of an effigy dressed in a dead man's clothes.

[1] Rohde, *Psyche*, cap. I.
[2] Hom. *Il.* VI. 417 ff., XXIII. 252 ff., XXIV. 791 ff.; *Od.* XI. 72 ff. and XII. 11 ff.

Moreover it is possible that the Mycenaean funeral-rite sometimes comprised an act of ceremonial cremation. To review here the archaeological evidence for some use of fire in Mycenaean graves is unnecessary; it will suffice to quote from the summary given by Rohde[1] as the basis of his theory—to which I by no means assent—that a vigorous 'soul-cult,' involving propitiatory offerings to the dead, was a religious feature of that age. 'Traces of smoke, remnants of ash and charcoal, point to the fact that the dead bodies were laid on the spot where were burnt those offerings to the dead which had previously been made in the tomb....On the ground, or sometimes on a specially prepared bed of flints, the offerings were burnt, and then, when the fire had gone out, the bodies were laid on top and covered over with sand, lime, and stones.'

Now the fact that in Mycenaean graves gifts were actually consumed by fire while the corpse was left to the process of natural decay is indisputable; but, if the fire employed had no further purpose, the practice of the Mycenaean age would be unique. The custom of all later ages was to treat the corpse and the gifts alike, to burn both or to bury both. This is implied in ancient literature[2], and confirmed by modern excavations; for funeral-urns seldom contain any remnants of gifts; which means that the gifts had been consumed on the pyre with the body, but that only the bones were collected and stored in the urn; whereas in graves the gifts are constantly found buried with the body and intact. Further the custom of burning both body and gifts is the old Achaean custom, as described by Homer in the funeral of Patroclus; and it would seem probable that the custom of interring both body and gifts intact was the original Pelasgian custom. Was then the use of fire in these Mycenaean graves the first step in the fusion of the Achaean and Pelasgian rites?

Again, the body was observed to lie on top of the burnt gifts. What is the meaning of this superimposition? According to Rohde the fire which consumed the gifts was allowed to go out, and the bodies were then laid on the cold ashes. But manifestly this cannot be proved. All that we know is that the fire did not

[1] *Psyche* I. pp. 31—32.

[2] Cf. Lucian, *De Luctu* 14, *ἐσθῆτα καὶ τὸν ἄλλον κόσμον συγκατέφλεξεν ἢ συγκατώρυξεν.*

consume the bodies. No one can assert that they were untouched by flame or ember and that the smell of fire did not pass over them. Was then the act of laying the body on top of the burnt or burning gifts an act of ceremonial cremation?

These questions I cannot answer; but one thing is clear. Either the fusion of the Achaean and Pelasgian rites had already begun, or else, in their original forms, they both comprised usages which greatly facilitated their subsequent fusion.

When we pass on to the Dipylon-period, there is no longer any doubt. Cremation and inhumation were practised both severally side by side and also conjointly as a single rite. The evidence on which I mainly rely is derived from two series of excavations, those of Philios[1] at Eleusis and those of Brückner and Pernice[2] in the Dipylon cemetery at Athens.

The autochthonous population of Attica naturally adhered in the main to the old Pelasgian rite of inhumation. Yet at Eleusis, even according to Philios who strangely belittles the importance of his own discoveries[3], there was one certain case of cremation; and in the Dipylon cemetery also was found one urn which could be dated with equal certainty. One or two other probable cases have also been recorded by others[4]. Clearly then as early as the eighth century B.C. cremation was sometimes used, side by side with inhumation, as the effective means of disintegrating the dead body.

And there is equally sure proof that the two rites were also employed conjointly, in the sense that a ceremonial act of inhumation followed actual cremation, or a ceremonial act of cremation accompanied actual inhumation. A conspicuous instance of the former is the one certain case of actual cremation recorded by Brückner and Pernice[5]. A bronze urn containing the calcined bones of a boy or girl had been deposited not in a mere hole dug

[1] Described in *Ἐφημερὶς Ἀρχαιολ.* 1889, pp. 171 ff.

[2] Described in *Athen. Mittheilungen*, 1893, pp. 73—191.

[3] The perusal of Philios' narrative leaves the impression that several cases of cremation were discovered. Yet in his concluding summary he says: "Burial, not burning, of the dead was in those times the more prevalent custom, since in one case and one only can we admit that the corpse was not buried but burnt." I note that Brückner and Pernice (*op. cit.* p. 149) in referring to Philios' results tacitly soften his rigid 'one and one only' into the more supple 'one or two.' For justification of this see Philios, *op. cit.* pp. 178, 179, 180, 185.

[4] Hirschfeld, in *Annali*, 1872, pp. 135, 167, cited by Brückner and Pernice *op. cit.* p. 148. Κουμανούδης, in *Πρακτικὰ*, 1873–4, p. 17.

[5] *Op. cit.* pp. 91 ff.

to fit it, but in a grave fully prepared as if for the reception of a corpse. The measurements of the grave were of normal size; in it had been laid, along with the urn, gifts of the usual nature—an amphora, two boxes, a bowl, and a jug; and above the grave, in a prepared space considerably wider than the actual grave, stood one of the large Dipylon-vases. In every respect the interment had been carried out as if it were the interment of an unburnt body. An attempt had been made so to combine the two rites of cremation and inhumation that neither should seem subordinate to the other.

Instances of the other sort, in which ceremonial cremation accompanied actual inhumation, are furnished by Philios' excavations at Eleusis. Speaking of the large earthenware jars which often served as coffins for children, he says, 'Whereas the bones contained in these vessels were unburnt, all round the vessels in the soil traces of burning were abundant and varied[1].' Now these traces of fire cannot have been due to the burning of gifts brought subsequently to the interment; for that custom naturally resulted in a stratum of burnt soil above the grave. But here the traces were 'all round the vessels, in the soil.' Apparently then we have here a practice parallel to that of Mycenaean times. The body was interred and obtained its actual dissolution by natural decay; but before the interment a fire was kindled in the grave, and among the flames or on the embers the body in its coffin-jar was laid and covered over with the soil. Whether at Eleusis, as at Mycenae, the funeral-gifts were consumed in that fire, we do not know for certain; but since it is undoubtedly rare to find any gift along with the child's body in these vessels, it is reasonable to suppose that the few gifts—few, because all the circumstances of these funerals seem humble—were burnt[2] just as were the grander offerings at Mycenae. At any rate these cases reveal an intention of associating fire with the buried body, of adding to the rite of interment a ceremonial act of cremation.

The tendency towards fusion of the two funeral rites has now been traced through the pre-historic era; it is in the historic period

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 178.

[2] Brückner and Pernice take this view of the fact, though the words which they use are coloured by their acceptance of Rohde's theory of propitiatory offerings to the dead. 'Vor der Beerdigung, so scheint es nach den Funden des Herrn Philios, sind an der Grabstätte des öfteren Brandopfer dargebracht worden.' *Op. cit.* p. 151.

that the fusion appears most general and most complete. I will take as typical instances a number of graves, ranging in date from the sixth to the fourth century, opened by the two German excavators on whose narrative I have largely relied for the Dipylon-period[1]. These graves numbered somewhat under two hundred. In the classification of them there appears the important item—forty-five graves in which the body had been actually burned. In other words, in approximately a quarter of the cases observed the rites of cremation and inhumation had been combined, and that too in such a way that both elements, fire and earth, might well have seemed to share together the work of dissolution. Neither method is here exalted to sole efficacy, neither is degraded into mere ceremony. The balance of importance is adjusted, and the two acts which form the composite funeral-rite are recognised as equal. Indeed there are no longer two distinct acts; they have coalesced; the moment and the act of laying the body in the earth are also the moment and the act of laying the body on the pyre. Amalgamation is complete.

Having traced the history of Greek funeral-usage down to this point, I may now fairly claim, first, that my working hypothesis—the practice of ceremonial cremation as the counterpart of ceremonial inhumation—is justified by the single and consistent explanation which it affords of the phenomena which I have noticed (and I may add that I shall have occasion to explain other phenomena in the latter half of this chapter in the same way); secondly, if that explanation be accepted, I may claim that the only condition under which the two rites could have been employed both severally as alternatives and conjointly as one composite rite was that the religious purpose underlying them both was one and the same. And this purpose, if there is any meaning in the stories of Patroclus, Elpenor, Polynices, and Polydorus, was to give to the dead that which they most craved, a speedy dissolution.

The evidence for this unity of purpose is, I hope, already sufficient; but confirmation may be found, if required, in the smaller details of funeral-custom. It is, I believe, a received principle of textual criticism that, in estimating the relation of two manuscripts of a given author, coincidence in *minutiae* is the true criterion of their common origin or other close kinship, and

[1] See *op. cit.* pp. 78–9.

its testimony is not to be outweighed by a few conspicuous divergences. So too, I think, in estimating the mutual relation of two rites, the coincidence of all the minor circumstances connected with them is of more significance than one large and evident contrast between them. Such a contrast, let it be granted, exists between cremation and inhumation when employed separately. Yet it would be a rash and faulty judgement, I hold, which should at once infer thence that the two rites were informed by different religious ideas. The minute coincidences claim examination. If all that preceded and accompanied and followed the actual disposal of the corpse, whether by burning or by burial, exhibited uniformity in scheme and in scope; if the washing and the anointing, the arraying and the crowning, were performed with the same tender care whether the body was destined for the cold, slow earth or for the rapid flame; if from the death-chamber, where the body had lain in state and the kinsfolk, grouped in order of dearness about it, had paid in turn their debt of lamentation, the same sad pomp escorted the dead whether to the pyre or to the grave; if the same gifts—the same provision as it seems for bodily comfort—were mingled as ashes with the ashes of the dead or were consigned intact with the body yet intact to the will and keeping of the earth; then, whichever means the mourners chose for effecting the actual dissolution of the fleshly remains, their religious attitude towards death and their conception of the hereafter must have been single and constant.

Space forbids me to enter into the evidence for the uniformity of all this detail in all periods of Greek life. I will confine myself to two illustrations. The first shall be the *prothesis* or lying-in-state of the body with the solemn lamentation of the kinsfolk, for the most part women, grouped about it. I have elsewhere[1] described the scene; I have only to illustrate here the universality of it as the prelude alike to cremation and to inhumation, alike in Ancient and in Modern Greece, alike amid pagan and amid Christian surroundings. In the Mycenaean age the bodies of the dead were sumptuously arrayed—probably with a view to the lying-in-state; more than that cannot be actually asserted of the earliest epoch. But in the Homeric age, as at the funeral of Hector[2], the custom is seen already fully developed. In the Dipylon-age the scene

[1] See above, p. 347.

[2] *Il.* xxiv. 719 ff.

described by Homer is found depicted on the great vases that served as monuments over the graves[1]. A little later, the legislation of Solon is directed against the excesses to which the rite of solemn lamentation led[2]. Next, an orator of Athens is found declaiming against the wrongs done to him by the thirty tyrants, who, not content with having put his brother to death, had actually refused the use of any of the three houses belonging to the family and had forced them to lay out the body in a hired hut[3]. Again we have the ridicule of Lucian directed against the discordant scene of useless misery[4]. In strange company with him appears St Chrysostom upbraiding Christians for their extravagances of grief and threatening them with excommunication if they continue to call in heathen women to act as professional mourners[5]. Centuries passed without diminution of the custom, and the Venetians during their occupation of the Ionian islands enacted laws[6] in the spirit of those formulated by Solon more than two thousand years before. Of this custom it might well be said, '*et vetabitur semper et retinebitur*,' for it still maintains its old vogue and vitality, and is the necessary prelude of every peasant's funeral to-day.

My second illustration is a far more trivial circumstance, but not on that account less significant—the use of the foliage of the olive as a couch for the dead, whether on the bier which conveyed him to the grave or on the funeral-pyre. The reason for choosing olive-leaves does not concern us; there may have been, as Rohde suggests[7], some idea of purification connected with it; but it is only the wide-spread use of it which I have to illustrate. Among the ashes of those small pyres, on which the dead were laid in Mycenaean sepulchres, were recognised charred olive-leaves[8]. Lycurgus in curtailing the funeral-rites of Sparta bade his countrymen wrap their dead for burial in the red military cloak (as became a race of warriors) and in olive-leaves[9]. The Pythagoreans, who

[1] Cf. *Athen. Mittheil.* 1893, p. 103.
[2] Plutarch, *Solon* 20.
[3] Lysias, *Or.* XII. 18, 19.
[4] Lucian, *de Luctu*, 12 and 13.
[5] *Hom.* 32 *in Mat.* p. 306.
[6] Preserved among the archives of Zante, which the kindness of Mr Leonidas Zoës enabled me to inspect.
[7] *Psyche*, I. pp. 209 and 360. From this source I draw several of the following references.
[8] Tsountas in 'Εφημερὶς 'Αρχαιολ. 1888, p. 136.
[9] Plut. *Lycurg.* 27.

objected to cremation[1], laid their dead to rest on a bed of leaves gathered from myrtle, poplar, and olive[2]. An Attic law forbade the felling of certain olive-trees under penalty of a fine of a hundred drachmae per tree, but contained a saving-clause exempting cases in which olive-wood was wanted for funerals[3]. This permission points to a special use of olive-wood as fuel for the pyre, for, if a few branches or sprays only had been needed for decking out the bier, there would have been no question of felling whole trees. It was probably then this custom which Sophocles also had in mind, when the messenger, who brought the news of Polynices' tardy funeral, was made by him to specify 'fresh-plucked olive-shoots' as the material of the pyre[4]. Again, in a number of sarcophagi found by Fauvel outside the gates of Athens on the road to Acharnae the skeleton was observed to lie 'on a thick bed of olive-leaves[5].' In the second century of our era the custom of placing olive-branches on the bier still prevailed[6]; and at the present day the olive is often conspicuous at the funerals of peasants, either in the garland about the dead man's head or in the decoration of the bier.

Thus the uniformity of detail in funerals, whether the main rite was cremation or inhumation, no less than the tendency to amalgamate these two into a single rite, proves that, from the earliest ages known to us, their religious purpose had been identical—to give to the dead that speedy bodily dissolution which they desired.

But in spite of this unity of purpose, one or other rite doubtless continued long through force of custom to hold predominance in particular districts. In Attica it was perhaps not until the sixth or even the fifth century that the Pelasgian rite had entirely lost the support of ancestral tradition. But then and thence-forward the two methods appear to have been judged simply as methods, and the estimate of their respective merits was little affected by the old racial differences. But this does not mean that

[1] Iambl. *Vit. Pythag.* 154.
[2] Pliny, *N. H.* xxxv. 160.
[3] Dem. *Orat.* 43 § 71.
[4] *Antig.* 1201. Prof. Jebb in his note on this passage expresses the opinion that the θάλλοι νεοσπάδες were not fuel: in view of the Attic law above cited I am inclined to dissent. He also takes κλήματα in Ar. *Eccles.* 1031 to mean 'olive twigs' and not, as more usual, 'vine-shoots.' I pass by the passage as doubtful evidence.
[5] Ross, *Arch. Aufs.* i. 31.
[6] Artemid. *Oneirocr.* iv. 57.

the methods were judged wholly on their religious merits—on their adaptability to the single religious purpose. Cost and convenience were necessarily factors in determining the choice between them. Thus the question of cost must often have decided the poorer classes to choose inhumation; and in that portion of the Dipylon cemetery to which I have already referred, it was actually found that, out of the graves in which no evidence of cremation was found, more than a hundred were of a poor character, mere shafts in the earth, or at the best walled with rough brick-built sides, while only thirteen were of a costly style—sepulchres built with slabs of stone, or regular sarcophagi. And similarly other practical considerations must often have turned the scale in favour of the one or the other rite. The soldiers who fell at Marathon were simply interred, presumably because to dig a trench and to raise a mound in the middle of the plain was a more feasible task than to collect masses of fuel from the surrounding hill-sides; but the victims of the plague at Athens were with good reason cremated.

Nevertheless, where none of these external causes operated, there are signs that cremation was held in somewhat higher esteem than inhumation. The story went that Solon's body was burnt, by way of honour seemingly, and his ashes scattered over that island which he had won back for Athens. And we hear of cremation being accorded, apparently again as the more honourable rite, to other great men such as Dionysius, the famous tyrant of Syracuse, and Timoleon, her deliverer. But more conclusive is the evidence of literature, where not only the act itself is named, but a clear indication of the feeling of the actors is given. According to Aeschylus, the dead body of Agamemnon, king though he was, was merely hidden away in the ground by his blood-guilty wife; even in death she would show him no pity, do him no honour. But in Sophocles the dying Heracles is laid on a funeral-pyre, and the dead Polynices, to whom Antigone was perforce content to give the most meagre form of interment, obtains from Creon, when at last too late he repents, the full rite of cremation. And the tone too in which Herodotus once speaks of the two rites is significant: 'the funeral-rites of well-to-do Thracians,' he says, 'are as follows: the body lies in state for three days, and they slaughter all manner of

victims and make good cheer, when once the preliminary lamentation is done; and then they dispose of the body by cremation or merely by interment'—ἔπειτα δὲ θάπτουσι κατακαύσαντες, ἢ ἄλλως γῇ κρύψαντες[1]. The 'merely' plainly betrays Herodotus' own feeling that well-to-do persons might be expected to have the advantage of cremation.

In the following centuries the preference for cremation would seem to have become even more pronounced; for though both rites still continued in use, separately as well as conjointly, Lucian was able to call cremation the distinctively Hellenic rite[2]. But more marked still was the feeling in favour of cremation among those who upheld the old Greek religion when first they had to face the invasion of Christianity. 'The heathen for the most part,' says Bingham[3], 'burned the bodies of the dead in funeral piles, and then gathered up the bones and ashes, and put them in an urn above ground: but the Christians abhorred this way of burying; and therefore never used it, but put the body whole into the ground.' The conflict over this matter was bitter. The pagans taunted the Christians with fearing that, if their bodies were reduced to ashes by cremation, they would be incapacitated for the vaunted resurrection[4], and as a final injury to Christian martyrs sometimes burnt their bodies and scattered the ashes to the winds[5]. The Christians in retaliation condemned the rite of cremation as in appearance an act of cruelty to the dead body[6], and ridiculed the pagans for first 'burning up their dead in a most savage manner and then feasting them in a manner most gluttonous, using the flames alike for their service and for their injury[7]'—for their service in cooking them a funeral-meal, for their injury in consuming them to ashes. The two now conflicting rites continued in use until the end of the fourth century of our era; for reference is made to them in the laws of Theodosius[8]. But cremation must have been on the decrease; for Macrobius early in the fifth century says that in his time the practice had fallen into

[1] Herod. v. 8.
[2] Lucian, *de Luctu*, 21.
[3] *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Bk xxiii. cap. 2, whence I take the following references.
[4] Minucius, p. 32.
[5] *Acta Tharaci* ap. Baron. an. 299, n. xxi., Ammian. Marcell. lib. xxii. p. 241, Euseb. lib. viii. cap. 6.
[6] Tertull. *De Anima*, cap. 51.
[7] Tertull. *de Resur.* cap. 1.
[8] *Cod. Th.* lib. ix. tit. 17 *de Sepulcris violatis*, leg. 6.

entire desuetude, and all he knew of it was from reading[1]. 'It is most probable,' says Bingham, 'that the heathen custom altered by degrees from the time of Commodus the Emperor; for Commodus himself and many of his friends were buried by inhumation and not by burning .... and from that time the custom of burning might decrease till at last under the Christian emperors, though without any law to forbid it, the contrary custom entirely prevailed, and this quite dwindled into nothing.' If this view be correct, it will mean that the old preference for cremation exhibited by the adherents of paganism was only excited to temporary intensity by a spirit of antagonism towards Christianity, and that they soon returned to the old way of thinking and recognised inhumation as a method alternative, if slightly inferior, to cremation. When the bitterness of religious strife was over, and pagans and Christians lived more at peace together, the former may readily have resumed the practice of interment, which after all was their own heritage from dim ages long before the dawn of Christianity.

But though Macrobius in the fifth century speaks of cremation as then in disuse, the memory of it cannot have passed away so soon. Only a few generations were to lapse before the infusion of a Slavonic population into Greece. Among the superstitions which these intruders disseminated was one which concerned the resuscitated dead. The Greeks, as we have seen, themselves held a superstition on which the horrid imaginings of the Slavs were soon grafted; the common-folk became haunted by the dread of *vrykolakes*. How then did they deal with the bodies of such dead persons as were suspected? Not by adopting the Slavonic custom of impaling them, but by a revival of cremation. The advantage which that rite possessed over burial was remembered; by its aid the dissolution of the dead could be rendered quick and sure. Thus cremation came once more into use as a means to the same end as in old time—the quick dissolution of the dead body; but the motive for promoting that dissolution was, under the altered conditions, itself altered. Instead of love it was fear; instead of solicitude for the welfare of the dead, it was anxiety for the protection of the living.

Yet even so, the act of burning the *vrykolakas* was a purely

[1] *Saturnal.* lib. VII. cap. 7.

defensive, not an offensive, measure. It was not an act of hostility or reprisal, but merely a necessary act of self-preservation, which inflicted no hurt on the *revenant* but simply interposed an impassable barrier between the living and the dead. The motive was fear; there was little or nothing of hatred mixed with it. This is made clear by the fact that cremation has been used even in recent times in a case which had nothing whatsoever to do with the belief in *vrykolakes*, and where the sole motive was the old desire to serve the interests of the dead.

The occasion was the evacuation of Parga in 1819. The inhabitants of that town had long defied the Turks, but the end was at hand, and it was only by the intervention of the English that they were saved from the tender mercies of Ali Pasha. The English offered them asylum in the Ionian Islands and obtained from the Porte on their behalf a sum of money which fully indemnified them for the houses and lands which they abandoned. But in spite of the terms obtained, the emigrants never forgave the English for treacherously selling to the Turks, as they said, the home which they had defended so stoutly and so long[1]. This evacuation of Parga forms the theme of some ballads which have been preserved[2]. One of them runs as follows:

'Bird of black tidings, that art come from yon confronting coastland,
Tell me what mean those sobs of woe, those dismal lamentations,
That rise aloud from Parga's walls and shake the very mountains.
Hath the Turk overwhelmèd her, do fire and sword consume her?'
'The Turk hath not o'erwhelmèd her, nor fire and sword consume her;
The men of Parga have been sold, as ye sell goats and oxen,
And all must hie them thence to dwell in miserable exile.
They must leave all, the homes they love, the tombs of their own fathers,
The shrine whereat they bowed the knee, for infidels to trample.
Women in anguish rend their hair and beat their bare white bosoms,
Old men lift up their quavering voice in dismal lamentation,
Priests amid flowing tears strip bare the churches where they worshipped.
Dost see the glare of yonder fire? the pall of smoke above it?
There are they burning dead men's bones, the bones of valiant warriors,
Who made the hosts of Turkey quail and fired their captain's palace[3].
Yonder, I tell thee, many a son his father's bones is burning,
Lest the Liápid[4] light on them, lest Turk upon them trample.
Dost hear the wailing manifold wherewith the woodlands echo?
Dost hear the beating of the breast, the dismal lamentation?
'Tis that the parting hour has come, to part them from their country;
They kiss her very stones, they clasp her dust in fond caresses.'

[1] See Finlay, *History of Greece*, vol. v. pp. 274–6.

[2] Passow, *Popularia Carm. Graeciae recentioris*, nos. 222—224. I translate here no. 222.

[3] So I interpret, but without certainty, the words *καὶ τὸ βεζύρη κάψαν*, literally 'and they burnt the Vizir.'

[4] The Liápides were an Albanian tribe employed by the Turks.

The incident in this ballad with which we are concerned is the exhumation and burning of the remains of those dead warriors who had valiantly maintained the liberty of their native town; and there need be little doubt that the incident is actually historical, for the story is confirmed by a second ballad in the same collection[1]; but in any case all that concerns us here is the fact that the motive for such an act was known and appreciated by the authors of the two ballads.

Now in order to understand this motive, it must be remembered that the general custom of the Church in Greece is to exhume the bones of the dead at the expiration of three years from the time of burial, when dissolution is expected to be complete. Hence the kinsfolk for whose remains the men of Parga were concerned were those who had been recently buried and could not yet have attained complete dissolution. They feared that the Turks would disturb and desecrate the graves and thus obstruct the proper course of natural decay; and they therefore decided to adopt the alternative method of disintegration, and by cremation to effect speedily and surely that end which, without friends at hand to guard the graves from the molestation of foes and infidels, could not be secured by leaving the dead to the slow action of the earth. This decision then reveals a clear recognition of the superiority of cremation over inhumation as a means of compassing the final dissolution of the dead; and equally clear is the motive for seeking that end; it was not fear on their own account—to that feeling indeed the men of Parga had proved themselves strangers—but simply love and respect for the brave men who had fought, and perhaps had fallen, in the defence of freedom.

Since then the exhumation and cremation of the dead constituted in this case an act of love towards them, the same action in the case of suspected *vrykolakes* can never have been an act of hostility. It was rather a measure beneficial alike to the living and to the dead. To the living it gave immunity from the assaults of *vrykolakes*, and this without doubt was commonly the uppermost or indeed the only thought in the minds of those who had recourse to it; but to the dead too it gave repose. And indeed I cannot but suppose that this is the reason why the Greeks, when first confronted with the horror of *vrykolakes*, chose

[1] No. 223.

to burn them rather than to follow the Slavonic custom of impaling them. To impale them might have given security to the living, but it appeared as an act of cruelty and hostility against the dead. Cremation, by effecting immediate dissolution and the consequent severance of the dead from this world, was bound to give equal security to the living, and at the same time was an act of mercy and kindness to the dead. In effect, the new motive of dread which came along with Slavonic influence never excluded the old motive of love which inspired the sons of warriors at Parga no less than the chief of Homeric warriors at his comrade's funeral, and perhaps will, if occasion arise, prove itself not yet extinct. Cremation, though often in recent times employed primarily as a safeguard for the living, has all along been felt to confer also a benefit on the dead, an even surer and speedier benefit than inhumation secured.

Now if this feeling existed, and if there existed also from early times, as I have shown to be probable, a system of combining cremation of a ceremonial kind with actual inhumation, it might reasonably be expected that many who recognised the superior merit of cremation, but had not the means to carry out so costly a rite in full, would have availed themselves of the inexpensive ceremonial practice. This, I believe, is what occurred, and in this I shall seek the explanation of a custom which, like the practice of real cremation, has been bequeathed by Ancient to Modern Greece.

In the funerals of Ancient Greece the procession, which escorted the dead body from the room where it had lain in state to the pyre or the grave, carried torches. Where cremation was to be employed, these were doubtless used for kindling the pyre; the fire brought from the dead man's home in this world was used to speed him on his way to the next. But when inhumation was practised, what became of these torches? Was the fire brought from the dead man's home put to no purpose? Or were the torches thrown into the grave along with him? That we cannot tell, for the torches were quickly perishable. But there is one object commonly found in tombs which is suggestive of the association of fire with the buried body. That common object is a lamp. Here again we cannot tell whether that lamp was lighted when it was put in the grave. Some that have been dug up have certainly

been in use, for they bear marks of the flame; but of course they may have been in every-day use before they were devoted to the service of the dead. Yet the few facts known would at least fit the theory that the procession which carried out the dead man carried also fire from his home to the grave, and that either the torches themselves or a lamp lighted from them was put in the grave beside the body. If that view were correct, it would further be note-worthy that most of the lamps found are of little intrinsic value and of late date[1]. Now the fact that they are mostly worthless implies that they were often given by poor persons, or, if the other contents of the grave be of value, that the lamp was not brought as a gift for its intrinsic worth or beauty, but for some practical purpose; while the fact that they are mainly of late date means that the practice of putting them in the graves increased in frequency during the period which begins with the fifth century B.C.—that is to say, during that period in which we have already noted an increasing preference for cremation. Further the increase in the frequency of lamps makes it improbable that they are to be reckoned as part and parcel of the ordinary furniture of a grave; for the *lekythi* and other vases which were the ordinary gifts to the dead had already in the fifth century assumed a conventional character. Any fresh departure therefore after that century, or any increase in the frequency of one particular object among the contents of graves, must be a sign of some new or more strongly marked feeling towards the dead. Now all these facts and inferences are intelligible on one hypothesis; and that hypothesis is that the lamps found in the graves were put there lighted and burning, as the ceremonial minimum of the rite of cremation for which a growing preference is evident during some four centuries before the Christian era.

When we pass on to the early days of Christianity, a similar series of facts meets our view. The Church officially rejected and reprobated the practice of cremation. Converts therefore were bound to use inhumation; and this obligation probably excited the less repugnance, in that interment was no new thing to them, but had always been alternative, if slightly inferior, to cremation.

[1] Actual data on this point are difficult to obtain; but archaeologists whom I consulted in Greece were all agreed, that lamps are more frequent in graves of late date, most frequent in the Greco-Roman period.

But while even cheerfully obeying the law of the Church thus far, they clung to many of the details of their old funeral-custom, some of which were allowed by the Church, others disallowed. The practice of laying out the dead in rich and choice robes continued and called down strong rebuke from St Jerome[1]; the excessive lamentation and the use of hired mourners at the lying-in-state provoked St Chrysostom to threats of excommunication[2]; yet both these customs still obtain. But the custom of carrying torches in the funeral-procession was continued without even a protest on the part of the Church. Perhaps it was felt to be a harmless concession to ancient custom; perhaps then as now ecclesiastical taste even favoured the consumption of many candles in religious ceremonies. At any rate the fact is clear that the pagan custom of carrying torches in the procession held a place also in Christian ritual. What was the reason for which the common people held to their old custom? The torches were not needed any longer to kindle pyres; for actual cremation was abolished by the Church. Nor were they needed to give light to the procession; for Christian funerals, except in times of persecution, took place in open daylight. The reason was, I believe, that by means of these torches fire was carried along with the dead from his home to his grave, and that there a ceremonial act, a semblance of cremation, was combined with the rite of inhumation. And there are some indications that the fire brought to the grave-side was actually associated in some way with the dead body. In a disquisition 'about them that sleep,' which passed for a work of St Athanasius[3], there is a recommendation to burn a mixture of oil and wax at the grave of the dead; and though the practice inculcated is disguised as 'a sacrifice of burnt-offering to God,' it is possible to attribute it to a less Jewish and more Greek motive, a desire to keep up the old custom of cremation, be it only in a ceremonial form. Again we have evidence that the custom of burning lights at the graves of the dead was commonly followed for some non-Christian purpose; for the Council of Eliberis saw fit to forbid it under pain of excommunication[4]. This non-Christian purpose will explain itself in the light of some modern customs.

[1] Hieron. *Vita Pauli* 4, cap. 66. [2] Chrysostom, *Hom.* 32 *in Mat.* p. 306.
[3] Cited by Durant, *de Ritibus*, lib. I. cap. xxiii. n. 14 (p. 235). I have been unable to discover the original passage. Cf. Bingham, *op. cit.* XXIII. 3.
[4] See Bingham, *Antiquities of the Christian Church*, Bk XXIII. cap. 3 *ad fin.*

There is a custom well known in Modern Greece which consists in the maintenance of what is called 'the unsleeping lamp' (*τὸ ἀκοίμητο καντῆλι*). A fair general idea of it may be given by saying that after a funeral a light is kept continuously burning either in the room where death took place or at the grave for a period of either forty days or three years. This variation in time and place requires examination. In customs, as in other things, there is a right way and a wrong way; variety in observance is not original; there is a proper time and a proper place.

First then, which is the proper place for this particular custom, the chamber of death or the grave-side?

The localities, in which that form of the custom which I shall show to be correct in this particular has come most conspicuously under my own observation, are Aráchova, a village near Delphi; Leonídi on the east coast of Laconia; a cemetery in the Thriasian plain belonging, I think, to the village of Kalývia; and the island of Aegina. In the last-mentioned it is an ordinary lantern which is used; it is placed at the head of the grave, and for forty days after the funeral is so trimmed and tended that the flame is not once extinguished. At Aráchova and in the Thriasian plain each grave is provided with an erection capable of sheltering a naked light. Some of the erections are like doll's-houses with door and windows complete; others are mere boxes; others again are no more than a few tiles or flat stones set on edge to form a square and covered over with a roof of the same material. At Aráchova the lamps contained in these erections are tended both evening and morning, and the obligation to keep them burning uninterruptedly for three years, until the exhumation of the body, is strongly felt and scrupulously discharged. In the Thriasian plain the light is kept burning with equal care, but I am uncertain for what period. At Leonídi some shelters of the same kind as those described are in use; but there are also more elaborate tombs at the head of which is built a small recess below the level of the ground or at any rate under the slab of stone or marble which covers the grave, and in this recess, which is closed with a small door allowing the passage of air through its chinks, is placed 'the unsleeping lamp.' Here again the lights are kept burning until the exhumation takes place, and the lamps are fed and trimmed every evening. At Gytheion a device not dissimilar,

though ruder, was formerly employed; among some old graves, now neglected, from which, it appeared, the bones of the dead had never been exhumed, I noticed several plastered over with a rough concrete in which was sunk at the head of the grave an iron vessel, like a sauce-pan docked of its handle; this vessel had presumably served the purpose of sheltering a light.

Such then is the main aspect of this custom; but the preliminary details also require notice. The fire with which to light the 'unsleeping lamp' must not be kindled on the spot beside the grave, but is conveyed from the house of the deceased. There, in general, the moment that death takes place or at any rate so soon as the body is laid out in state, candles or lamps are lighted and are placed at the head and at the foot of the couch on which the body reposes. These are kept burning until the funeral-procession is ready to start, and along with the procession either the same lights or other tapers and candles lighted from them are carried to the grave; and here the same fire which was burning in the house of the dead is transmitted to the 'unsleeping lamp' at the grave.

This I believe to be the correct form of the custom, but I must notice other varieties and give my reasons for regarding them as less authentic. It is stated in a reliable treatise on the island of Chios[1], that there the people keep a lamp burning for forty nights in the room where a death has taken place, thinking that the soul wanders for forty nights before it goes down to Hades. The interpretation given evidently implies that the lamp is intended to give light to the spirit of the dead if in the course of its nightly wanderings it visits its former home.

Now so far as the Chian form of the custom is concerned, some such meaning might reasonably be assigned to it. But what of the more usual form of the custom by which the lamp is kept burning both night and day? A disembodied spirit, if it resemble an ordinary man, may reasonably be supposed to need a candle to see its way at night, but surely it needs none in the day-time; yet it is only the custom of burning the light all day long as well as at night that can have gained for it the name of 'the unsleeping lamp,' the lamp that is never extinguished. Here then is a visible defect in the Chian manner of observing the custom and likewise in the Chian manner of interpreting it; and a

[1] Κωνστ. Ν. Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, p. 341.

custom defective and misinterpreted in one important detail is open to suspicion in others. So far therefore as Chios is concerned, no great importance attaches to the fact that there the chamber of death is the place where the remnants of the custom are observed.

But there are other parts of Greece in which the death-chamber is the place for the 'unsleeping lamp,' and where the lamp still deserves that designation inasmuch as it is kept burning both day and night until the fortieth day after the funeral, and is not, as in Chios, lighted afresh each night. In such districts, I believe, the custom has long ceased to bear any meaning, and being on the wane has for convenience undergone a change. It is still felt to be obligatory to keep the flame that is lighted as soon as death has occurred burning constantly for forty days, but the work of tending it has been found to be more conveniently performed at home than in the grave-yard. The necessity to transmit the flame to the grave, to keep it continuously in close proximity to the dead, is no longer felt. This form of the custom can then be accounted for as a relaxation of that which I have put forward as the old and correct form; whereas on the other hand if the room where death occurred had originally been the proper place for maintaining the 'unsleeping lamp,' it would be impossible to account for the transference of the custom to the grave-side, where special shelters or receptacles must be made for the protection of the flame and where more trouble is needed to feed and to trim the lamps day by day. Aráchova and Leonídi where most pains are taken in the observance of the custom—and that not for forty days only but for three years—have the best claim to be regarded as the true exponents of the old custom. The proper place for the 'unsleeping lamp' is the grave-side.

But there is a variation also, as I have said, in the period of time during which this custom is kept up in different districts. In some it is a period of forty days, in others a period of three years; and in this respect there is a divergence between the usages even of those places which in other details have been shown to adhere faithfully to the old custom; for at Aráchova and Leonídi the longer period is customary, in Aegina the shorter. It is in this very variation that we find a clue to the meaning and purpose of the custom. In the earlier part of this chapter I showed, by quotation from a popular dirge and by the consideration of various customs

connected with death, that in the belief of the common-folk the dissolution of a dead body is effected by the fortieth day after burial. On the other hand the Church has more prudently fixed three years as the time required for dissolution, the period which must elapse before the body may be exhumed. Thus there are two periods, fixed respectively by popular opinion and by ecclesiastical authority, between which there is a choice; the *vox populi* and the *vox Dei* are here in disagreement; and according as preference is locally given to the one or to the other mandate, so is a period of forty days or a period of three years locally believed to be that required for the dissolution of the body. But these two periods are also those between which there is a local variation in the custom of maintaining the 'unsleeping lamp.' Hence it is reasonably to be inferred that the 'unsleeping lamp' is in some way closely connected with the dissolution of the body.

Moreover this connexion is actually recognised by the common-folk themselves, as witness the following two couplets from a funeral-dirge. The words are put, as so often in the dirges, in the mouth of the dead man, who in this instance is supposed to be young and to be addressing his forlorn lady-love.

'And when the priests with solemn song march toward the grave with me,
Steal thou out from thy mother's side and light me torches three;
And when the priests shall quench again those lights for me,—ah then,
Then, like the breath of roses, sweet, thou passest from my·ken[1].'

These lines are based on a belief which is fairly general among the Greek peasants, that consciousness of, and concern for, the things of this world are not broken off finally at the moment of death, but continue in some degree until the body of the dead is completely dissolved. Here the memories of love are spoken of as lasting until the priests quench the burning lights, which can be none other in the context than the 'unsleeping lamp'—for three, the number mentioned, is merely a number of peculiar virtue and has no special force. It follows then that the quenching of the lights is understood in the passage to denote the accomplish-

[1] These lines, or others in the same tenor, are well known among the professional *μυρολογίστριαις* (women hired to mourn at funerals). The version which I here follow is given by Passow, *Popul. Carm.* no. 377 A.

Κι' ὄντες νά με περάσουνε ψάλλοντες οἱ παπᾶδες,
Ἔβγα κρυφὰ 'π' τὴ μάνα σου κι' ἄναψε τρεῖς λαμπάδες·
Κι' ὄντες νά μου τὰ σβέσουνε παπᾶδες τὰ κηριά μου,
Τότες τρανταφυλλένια μου βγαίνεις ἀπ' τὴν καρδιά μου.

ment of that process of dissolution, which, though it mean the cessation of all intercourse with this upper world, is yet earnestly desired. Here in fact are plain words of popular poetry which recognise the connexion of the 'unsleeping lamp' with the dissolution of the body, and make the quenching of the one signify the completion of the other. It is going but a short step further to suppose that the presence of the lamp's flame at the grave was originally intended to advance the process of dissolution—or, in other words, that the maintenance of the 'unsleeping lamp' at the grave until the body is finally dissolved is an act of ceremonial cremation.

This supposition gains yet more in probability when we compare with the custom of the 'unsleeping lamp' another not dissimilar custom which obtains in Zacynthos. There, as elsewhere, candles or lamps are lighted about the dead body while it is lying in state, and fire from them is carried to the grave. But, arrived there, instead of lighting an 'unsleeping lamp,' the bearers of the candles drop them into the grave beside the corpse. In this we have a close parallel to the ancient custom of putting a lamp, probably enough, as I have suggested, a lighted lamp, into the grave; and at the same time it cannot but be intimately connected with the custom of the 'unsleeping lamp,' the purpose of which is now known to concern the dissolution of the dead body. I claim then that the series of customs which we have reviewed, exhibiting as they do an intention to associate fire in some close way with the buried body and, as in the modern form of the custom, to associate it therewith until the process of dissolution is complete, find a common explanation in the continuance of a practice already exemplified in earlier ages, the practice of ceremonial cremation in conjunction with the full burial rite.

Nor is this explanation open to attack on the ground that a mere lamp lighted near the dead body bears so little outward resemblance to real cremation. To the outside observer the ceremonial act may seem a mere travesty of that for which it is substituted; but to the persons concerned the presence of fire, in however small a volume, may have seemed sufficient; for in all ritual it is not the act, but the intention, which has value. I have already pointed out how interment was occasionally reduced to an equally ineffective minimum; but I may perhaps cite a still closer

parallel—another case in which a lamp is thought to have done duty for a real fire. There was in old time a custom, to which several ancient writers refer[1], of keeping a lamp burning both day and night in the Prytaneum or in the chief temple of a Greek city; and both Athens and Tarentum are said to have had these lamps so constructed that they could hold a supply of oil sufficient to last a whole year. Such lamps, it has been suggested[2], represented the fire on the city's hearth which was not allowed to go out. The purpose of the lamp was clearly not to give light—for then it need not have been kept burning by day as well as by night—but it was a labour-saving appliance for keeping the sacred fire ever burning. The small flame was in fact a rudimentary fire. Thus all that I am supposing is that a lamp could represent a real fire just as well at the tomb as in the Prytaneum.

If then my explanation of the modern custom is right, the fact that the common-folk, though they have for many centuries employed inhumation as the ordinary Christian rite, have clung at the same time to a ceremonial form of cremation which they still connect in some way with the dissolution of the buried corpse, is additional proof of the favour with which the quicker and surer rite was formerly, and perhaps here and there still is, regarded.

Thus then the study of ordinary funeral-usage has confirmed the conclusions drawn in preceding chapters from the study of a certain abnormal state of after-death existence. As incorruptibility was the greatest bane to the dead, so dissolution was the greatest boon that the living could give them. This dissolution was to be effected by one of two methods, cremation and inhumation, which in theory were alternative but in practice were frequently combined. The combination of them was due in the first instance to the amalgamation of two races to which they respectively appertained; but in later times the racial difference between the two rites was obliterated, and they were judged on their own merits, with the result that a preference for cremation manifested itself in funeral-usage. This preference was due to a recognition that cremation was a quicker and surer method of dissolution, and is itself strong testimony to the desire to effect dissolution. The end to which both rites were directed was the same, but since one led

[1] Theocritus xxi. 36 f.; Athenaeus 700 D; Pausan. i. 26. 7.
[2] Frazer, in *Journ. of Philol.* xiv. 145 ff.

to that end more quickly and surely than the other, it was rightly preferred.

Further the motive which prompted the living to effect the dissolution of the dead was not in general selfish; for dissolution, as we have seen, was a boon to the dead. That complete severance from this world, which came with the dissolution of the body, was in some way for the benefit of the dead. Patroclus sought for it, and Achilles granted his petition through love; and some three thousand years later the men of Parga are found effecting the rapid dissolution of their kinsfolk with the same motive. Only in one set of circumstances was the selfish motive of fear in operation, namely, where the resuscitated dead were, by the influence of Slavonic superstition, invested with the character of malignant blood-thirsty monsters against whom self-defence was imperative, and whose complete severance from this world was desirable as a safeguard for the living. But such circumstances were the exception. The rule was that cremation and inhumation alike were means to the dissolution of the dead and their complete severance from this world, and the motive which prompted living men to seek that end was love of the dead who would in some way benefit thereby.

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE BENEFIT OF DISSOLUTION.

THUS far the investigation of customs and beliefs in ancient and modern times relating to the treatment of the dead has established the fact that the dissolution of the body was a thing eagerly to be desired in the interests of the dead. With complete disintegration the *summum bonum* of the dead, so far as it was in the power of their surviving friends to win it for them, was secured. It remains to consider in what way the dead profited thereby.

Now I have hitherto spoken designedly of dissolution as a benefit, not to the souls of the dead nor to their bodies, but simply 'to the dead' without further specification. It will now limit the range of discussion as to the nature of the *summum bonum* to which dissolution gave access, if we can first answer the old question, *cui bono?* Is it the body alone or the soul alone or both conjointly on which the benefit is conferred? This question once answered, we shall have eliminated a certain number of possible conceptions of future happiness.

That the body alone might have been the recipient of the whole benefit is an idea which no one will entertain. Was it then the soul alone to which the dissolution of the body brought gain? Death, as we have learnt, was not a complete and final severance of soul from body; the soul might re-enter and re-animate the corpse. Was dissolution then believed to complete the severance?

The deliverance of the soul from the bondage of the body, the divorce of spirit from matter, is an idea which has appealed and does appeal to many, and would therefore furnish a motive of considerable intrinsic probability for the treatment which the Greek

people have consistently accorded to their dead; the dissolution of the body, it might be supposed, was desired and hastened in order that the soul might be freed from its last link with this material world and pass away winged and unburdened towards things ethereal.

But such an explanation savours too much of philosophy and too little of popular religion. 'The rehearsal of death,' that is of the severance of soul from body, was according to Socrates the proper occupation of the philosopher; and death itself was welcome to him as a final release of the soul, the true self, from the fetters of physical existence. But the very emphasis which the whole of the *Phaedo* gives to this idea, the insistence of Socrates that his real self is that which converses with his friends and seeks to convince them of his views, and not the corpse which they will soon be burying or burning as seemeth them good[1], suggest, if anything, that in the popular religion the severance of soul from body was not desired, and the true self was not conceived as a thing apart from body. At any rate the reason for desiring dissolution must be sought from more popular sources.

I return therefore to a passage[2] on which I have already touched more than once, the earliest passage of extant literature, in which a dead man is represented as craving the dissolution of his body. Why was it that the soul of Patroclus desired so urgently the last rites for his body? Was it for the benefit of his soul only? Popular religion, as we have seen, did not reckon death a final severance of soul and body; for the soul might return and re-animate the body. Was then dissolution believed to complete the severance, annihilating the body and emancipating the soul? Did the future happiness of the soul depend upon such emancipation? Did Patroclus, in the case before us, crave dissolution in order that his soul, finally severed from his body, might find happiness?

Homer certainly peoples the lower world with souls only, severed from their former bodies. It is clearly the soul only of Patroclus which will pass the gates of Hades, when once his request for the burial of his body has been fulfilled; for it is 'the souls, the semblances of the dead[3],' who bar his entrance thereto

[1] Plato, *Phaedo* 115 c ff.
[2] Hom. *Il.* XXIII. 65 ff.
[3] Hom. *Il.* XXIII. 72.

meanwhile. But those souls are not happy souls. The house of Hades is not a place of happiness; it is dank, murky, mouldering; and the souls themselves are not of a nature to enjoy anything; they are feeble, impotent wraiths, mere semblances of men, all doomed to the same miserable travesty of life; the bodies from which they are now severed were their real selves[1], and there remain now only impalpable joyless phantoms. 'Sooner,' cries the spirit of Achilles to Odysseus, 'would I be a serf bound to the soil, in the house of a portionless man whose living were but scant, than lord over all the dead that are perished[2]'; for the old valour even of Achilles avails him no more; his soul fares in the house of Hades even as all others fare; all alike are doomed to everlasting futility in a land of everlasting gloom. Fitly is the soul of Patroclus said to have sped, at the moment of death, towards Hades' realm 'bewailing its fate in that it had left vigour and manhood[3].'

How then comes it that anon the same soul is eager to pass the gates of Hades? Surely the wanderings of the dead Patroclus, whether in the form of a *revenant* as the popular belief would have had it, or, according to Homer's version, as a disembodied spirit, would hardly be more pitiable than the lot which he in common with all the dead must suffer below. Why then this eagerness?

I can find nothing in Homer to justify it; it appears to me wholly inconsistent with the Homeric conception of the under-world.

And this inconsistency is of wide bearing. The cases of Patroclus and Elpenor are not isolated. The same eagerness for dissolution on the part of the dead has, as we have seen, been steadily recognised in all the relations between the living and the dead from the days of Homer until now. That which is at variance with the Homeric conception of the hereafter is not merely the petition of Patroclus, but the idea on which the funeral-customs of a whole people have been based for nearly three thousand years.

Such a discrepancy cannot but force upon us the question how far the Homeric conception of the hereafter was the popular conception.

[1] Cf. the constant contrast of *αὐτὸς* and *ψυχή*, as in *Iliad* I. 3—4, and twice in the passage before us, *Il.* XXIII. 65 f. and 106 f.

[2] Hom. *Od.* XI. 489 ff.

[3] Hom. *Il.* XVI. 857.

That the whole picture of the house of Hades and of the condition of the departed therein was not an Homeric invention is, I suppose, indisputable. Its two main features are the gloom of the place and the lack of distinction between the lots of those who dwell there[1]. Of these the first at any rate is frequent enough in later literature, and indeed held so firm a place in the Greek mind that 'to see the light' became synonymous with 'to live in this upper world'; and even down to the present day both ideas live on. The constant epithets which Homer applies to the house of Hades, 'cold' (*κρυερός*) and 'mouldering' (*εὐρώεις*), are exactly reproduced in the epithets with which Hades, now a place instead of a person, is described in modern dirges—*κρυοπαγωμένος*, 'frozen,' and *ἀραχνιασμένος*, 'thick with spiders' webs'[2]; and the same uniform misery of all the departed is likewise a common theme in the many songs that deal with Charon and the lower world. All this could not have been effected by the influence of Homer alone, great though it was, if he had himself invented the whole conception. It is clear that he utilised a conception which was before his time, and still is, a popular conception.

But there is equally good evidence of a totally different presentation of the future state. A fragment of one of Pindar's dirges contradicts the Homeric description of the lower world in every point. 'Upon the righteous the glorious sun sheddeth light below while night is here, and amid meadows red with roses lieth the space before their city's gate, all hazy with frankincense and laden with golden fruits; and some take their joy in horses and feats of prowess, and others at the draught-board, and others in the music of lutes, and among them every fair flower of happiness doth blossom; and o'er that lovely land spreadeth the savour of all manner of spices that be mingled with far-gleaming fire on the gods' altars[3].' So then this under-world is not cold and murky, but is warmed and lighted by the sun; its inhabitants are not frail spirits incapable of joy, but take their pleasure as aforetime

[1] The few inconsistencies in the *Odyssey*, such as the physical punishment of Tityos, Tantalos, and Sisyphos (*Od.* xi. 576 ff.), or again the mention of the 'asphodel mead' (*Od.* xi. 539, xxiv. 13), are unimportant. They are, I think, adventitious Pelasgian elements in the Homeric scheme of the future life, and it may be noted that the *Iliad* is singularly free from them, while in *Odyssey*, Bk xi., where they chiefly occur, they are obviously incongruous with the general conception of the lower world.

[2] See above, p. 99.

[3] Pindar, Fr. 129 (95).

in the world above; nor is the lot of all the same, for it is only the righteous who enjoy this bliss.

The popular character of this conception is equally clear. The distinction between the varying fortunes of the dead—the hope of happiness for some in contrast with the universal misery of the Homeric under-world—is an idea which finds expression throughout ancient literature; and if the house of Hades often remains none the less a place of gloom, that is because the abode of the righteous is often transferred to the islands of the blest, and the dark under-world left as a place of punishment for the wicked. At the present day too the same ideas are widely current among the common-folk. It is true that the dirges more generally pourtray the lower world as wrapped in Homeric gloom, and the condition of the departed as monotonously miserable; but the express purpose of these dirges, recited beside the dead body before it is carried out to burial, is to excite the mourners to a frenzy of grief, and the professional dirge-singer (for there are still women in some parts of Greece who follow that calling) would soon lose her work if, instead of harrowing the feelings of the mourners, she took upon herself to comfort them; her whole business is to move to tears those whom the bereavement itself has left unmoved, or to stimulate to fresh outbursts of lamentation those who are already spent with sorrow. But in a few folk-songs is found the more cheerful belief that the departed still continue the pursuits which they followed in this life[1]; while as for their abode, any peasant who should have the Pindaric description of the future home of the blessed explained to him, would unhesitatingly identify it with that which he himself calls Paradise. Some points perhaps in that description would surprise him no less than they would please him, as for example the permission to play draughts, but they would not obscure his recognition; the place of fair flowers and fruits and scents could be none other than Paradise. "The people of modern Greece," says a Greek writer[2],..."unable to comprehend the idea of spiritual joys, consider Paradise a place of largely material and sensuous pleasures. The Paradise of the Greek folk is watered by great rivers,...and in it there grow trees which diffuse odours sweet past telling....Agreeably with this reception of the idea of Paradise by

[1] See above, p. 345.

[2] Πολίτης, Μελέτη, p. 407 ff.

the people, the fathers of the church also were compelled to describe Paradise in terms of the senses as well as of the spirit, thus making certain concessions to popular feeling and ideas. 'Some,' says John of Damascus[1], 'have imagined a sensuous Paradise, others a spiritual Paradise. For my part I think that, just as man himself has been created with senses as well as with spirit, so the most holy close (ἱερώτατον τέμενος) to which he has access appeals alike to the senses and to the spirit.'" The compromise in this passage is cleverly justified, but it has not lasted; the pagan part of it alone has survived, and the Paradise of the modern folk is none other than that abode which Pindar described. Even the rivers thereof, which are naturally desired above all things by the inhabitants of a dry and dusty land, were probably not absent from Pindar's picture; for Plutarch, to whom we owe the preservation of the fragment, passes in one passage from actual quotation of the opening lines to a mention of smooth and tranquil rivers flowing through the land[2]; and in the kindred picture of the Islands of the Blest, which Pindar paints elsewhere, he does not omit to mention the water wherewith the golden flowers are refreshed[3]; for in his eyes too water was the best of earth's gifts, even as gold was the brightest of wrought treasures[4].

It was this high appreciation of water which first informed a custom prevalent all over Greece on the occasion of funerals. As the bier passes along the road, the friends and neighbours of the dead man empty at their doorway or from their windows a vessel of water, and usually throw down the vessel itself to be broken on the stones of the road. This custom is evidently very old, for in some places the use of the water, the very essence of the rite, has become obsolete, and all that remains of the custom is the breaking of a piece of crockery. And even though in most places the custom is observed in full, its meaning has generally been forgotten, and curious conjectures have been made to explain it. Some interpret the custom as a symbol of that which has befallen the dead man; the vessel is his body, the water is his soul; the pouring out of the water symbolises the vanishing of the soul, and

[1] Ἐκθ. ὀρθοδοξ. πίστεως 11 (25); Migne, *Patrolog.* (*ser. Graec.*) Vol. xciv. p. 916.
[2] Plutarch, *de occult. viv.* cap. 7, cited by Bergk in *Lyrici Graeci*, *ad loc.*
[3] Pind. *Ol.* ii. 134. [4] Pind. *Ol.* i. 1.

the dead body will fall to pieces like the broken crock. Others say that they pour out the water 'in order to allay the burning thirst of the dead man[1],' a notion ominously suggestive of the boon which Dives sought of Lazarus. But the real purpose of the rite is still known in some of the Cyclades, where exactly the same custom is followed also on the occasion of a man's departure from his native village[2], to live, as they say, in exile. And the purpose is to promote the well-being of the dead or of the exile in the new land to which he is going. The pouring out of the water is in fact a rite of sympathetic magic designed to secure that the unknown land shall also be well-watered and pleasant and plentiful; and the breaking of the vessel which held the water is due, I suppose, to a feeling that an instrument which has served a magical purpose must not thereafter be put to profane and mundane uses. This custom then in itself bears witness how wide-spread is, or has been, the conception of the other world as a land of delight wherein the pleasant things of this world shall still abound.

Thus then it must be acknowledged that two contradictory popular conceptions of the hereafter have survived side by side as a twofold inheritance from the ancient world. The one pervades the whole of Homer; the other is best expounded in a fragment of Pindar[3]; and the fundamental difference between them is this, that the one consigns all the dead alike to gloom and misery, while the other distinguishes between the future fortunes of the righteous and the unrighteous, and holds out the hope of happiness in a yet brighter world than this. Whence came these two conceptions?

The world which Homer describes is the Achaean world, and I suspect that his under-world is likewise the Achaean under-world. The Achaean religion, as exhibited in Homer, is in no way profound. The gods are only Achaean princes on a yet grander scale, endowed with immortality. Men's relations with them are eminently simple and practical; sacrifice is expected if prayers are to be

[1] *νὰ δροσίσουν τὴ λαύρα τοῦ πεθαμένου.*

[2] Cf. Theodore Bent, *The Cyclades*, p. 220.

[3] This is of course only one out of several passages in which Pindar speaks of the future life, and he does not adhere to any one doctrine; elsewhere, as in *Ol.* II., his views are coloured largely by Pythagorean or Orphic eschatology, although there is a close resemblance between the isles of the blest there described (126—135) and the abode depicted in this fragment.

answered. But both gods and men are concerned with this upper world only; death closes all relations between them. The gods are unconcerned, unless it be for some special favourite; they live on Olympus as aforetime amid feasting, quarrelling, laughter, and love; but men leave these pursuits and pastimes, and go down to the misery of Hades' house; their souls which fled lamenting from their limbs at the hour of death still exist, else could they not appear to living men in the visions of night; but their existence is all misery, for they lack all that made this life pleasant. Their joys had been the joys of a strenuous, full-blooded life, the joys of battle, of feasting, of song, of comradeship; and these joys were no more. The future existence of the soul was, to the Achaeans, simply the negation of the present bodily life.

But the religion of a later age was by no means so simple. The Homeric gods were still worshipped in the old way, and received their sacrifices in exchange for favours desired or granted. But there was another element in religion of which Homer shows little trace—an element of awe and mystery. Homer indeed names the Erinyes as beings concerned with the punishment of certain sins; but he shows no knowledge of that awful doctrine of blood-guilt which Aeschylus associates with them; the murdered man's power of vengeance is wholly ignored; for among the Achaeans the next of kin might accept a price at the hands of the murderer, and allow him to remain in the land[1], without himself incurring any pollution or any manifestation of his dead kinsman's wrath. Again Homer knows indeed of Demeter as a goddess connected with the crops; but there is nothing in his casual mention of her to suggest that the mysteries of her worship transcended the rites of all the Olympian gods. Yet no one, I suppose, would imagine that these profounder elements in ancient religion were of post-Homeric growth or could possibly have been evolved from the transparently simple religion of the Achaeans.

On the contrary it is known that the more mysterious rites and doctrines of the Greek religion were a legacy from the Pelasgians. That the mysteries of Demeter were Pelasgian in origin is proved by the localities in which her worship most flourished, and is corroborated by the explicit statement of Herodotus[2], who was disposed to refer other mystic cults also to

[1] Hom. *Il.* IX. 632 ff. [2] Herod. II. 51.

the same source[1]. In fact the co-existence, or even the conflict, of the old Pelasgian and the newer Achaean religions is constantly recognised in ancient literature, and to the Pelasgian is ascribed all that most touched men's hearts, be it with awe or with pity—with awe as in the conflict between the Erinyes and the new dynasty of gods whom Apollo and Athene represent, with pity in the dolorous struggle of Prometheus against the tyrant Zeus. The Pelasgian religion, with all its horrors, drew the real sympathies of the mystic Aeschylus; he could worship in deepest reverence Demeter and her mysteries[2]; he could worship perhaps even the 'reverend goddesses,' horrible though they were in their displeasure; but his heart must have been cold towards the usurping Olympian gods. There is true insight in that passage of Aristophanes[3] where Aeschylus summarises the benefits conferred by great poets on the Greek race, and praises Homer, the Achaean poet, for his lessons in discipline and valour and warfare, but Orpheus, sometimes reputed the founder of the Pelasgian mysteries, for instituting religious rites and teaching men to abstain from bloodshed. And the feelings of Aeschylus were the feelings of his countrymen. The Athenians boasted of a great Achaean goddess as the foundress and patroness of their city, but their personal hopes of future happiness centred in the Pelasgian Demeter. The same generation of Athenians listened with delight to Aristophanes' ridicule of those gods whom Homer accounted greatest, and were aghast at the thought that the mysteries had been profaned. The Achaean gods, it would seem, made good figure-heads for the official religion of the state; they served as majestic patrons of a city, or of a great national festival where religion was of less real account than horse-racing, athletics, and commerce; but the hearts of the people clave to the older, more awful, more mysterious deities of the Pelasgians, and the holiest sanctuaries[4] were those which had been holy long before the intrusion of the Achaean gods.

It was to this Pelasgian element in Hellenic religion that the doctrine of future rewards and punishments belonged; for, as we shall see more fully in the next chapter, participation in the

[1] Herod. II. 171. [2] Aristoph. *Frogs*, 884. [3] *Op. cit.* 1032 ff.

[4] A conspicuous example is Delphi, where the Achaean god Apollo had usurped the place of some oracular deity of the Pelasgians, cf. Plutarch, *de defect. orac.* cap. 15 p. 418. See Miss Harrison, *Proleg. to the Study of Greek Religion*, pp. 113 f.

Pelasgian mysteries of Demeter at Eleusis was held to be an earnest of future bliss, from which the impure or uninitiated were excluded.

Thus then there were two popular conceptions of the future life—the Achaean conception of universal misery in a cold and gloomy under-world, and the Pelasgian conception which distinguished between the lots of the righteous and the unrighteous, and held out to some men the promise of bliss. Now with the former conception, as we have already seen, the belief that the dead eagerly desired dissolution is utterly inconsistent; none could be in haste to pass the gates of Hades with the prospect of nothing but misery within. But where there were hopes of happiness, the eagerness for dissolution as a means of attaining thereto is at once intelligible. This desire then, which has constantly pervaded the mind of the Greek people and has furnished the single motive of their funeral-rites down to the present day, is of Pelasgian origin; and if Homer borrowed it and incongruously combined it with a purely Achaean presentation of the under-world, we must no more judge of its real meaning by the Homeric setting of it than we would form an opinion of the place of the Erinyes or of Demeter in Greek religion by Homer's occasional references to them.

The fact then that Homer, in accordance with the Achaean religion, considered the dissolution of the body to mean the annihilation of the body and represented the soul as alone entering into the lower world is wholly immaterial to the present enquiry. It is the Pelasgian conception of future bliss with which we are concerned; for that alone can account for the eagerness of the dead to obtain dissolution. What then are the blissful occupations of the righteous in the other world? 'Some,' says Pindar, 'take their joy in horses and feats of prowess, and others at the draught-board, and others in the music of lutes.' Clearly these dead are very different beings from the souls which peopled the Homeric under-world. Athletics could be no pastime for feeble unsubstantial spirits; the game of draughts would be ill suited to them that have no mind in them[1]; and those whose thin utterance is like the squeak[2] of a bat would get and give little pleasure by singing to the lute. No; the pursuits of the dead as depicted by Pindar are the pursuits which men of flesh and blood enjoy;

[1] *Il.* xxiii. 104. [2] *Il.* xxiii. 101.

and the abode in which they dwell, the paradise of flowers and fruits and sweet odours, is an abode to gladden men of flesh and blood. But a people whose ideal of future bliss lay in bodily enjoyments cannot surely have looked forward to the annihilation of the body and the survival of the soul alone; the joys which they anticipated hereafter presupposed the continuance of some kind of bodily existence.

Such a notion moreover cannot but seem more in harmony with the whole spirit of the Greek world than the Homeric doctrine of the survival of the soul only. A nation so conspicuous for their love of human beauty and their delight in the human form could not have viewed the extinction thereof with any feeling other than the most poignant regret—a feeling which, as we know, the Homeric doctrine did actually inspire in those who accepted it. The more thoughtful and hopeful religion of the Pelasgians, unless it had anticipated the philosophy of Plato in decrying the body and exalting the soul—an idea of which there is no trace—was bound to give promise that body as well as soul should survive death and dissolution.

Again it may fairly be claimed that in any religion of a profounder character than the Achaean, in any religion which contains some positive ideas of the future life and does not view it merely as the negation of the present life, that which men hope to become in the future state is something more similar to the deity or deities in whom they believe. Their conception of godhead and their conception of their own condition after death are of necessity founded upon the same ideal of happiness—a happiness which the gods already enjoy and which men hope to share. The Buddhist looks forward to the day when he shall become like his deity—even one with his deity—clean from the grossness of matter, free from bodily desires and necessities, spirit unalloyed. The Christian believes in a God who became man and survived the death of man not in the form of a spirit only but with flesh and bones, and he himself looks forward to the resurrection of the body. Socrates held that wisdom and goodness were one and pertained to the soul only, and the God into whose presence his soul would pass after death was 'the good and wise God,' rightly called Hades, that is, the invisible and spiritual, with whom the soul has kinship[1]. But

[1] Plato, *Phaedo*, cap. 29 (p. 80 D).

what of the ordinary Greek? His gods were not invisible or spiritual. Pelasgian and Achaean deities alike were beings of flesh and blood, robust, active, sensuous; they ate and drank, they waked and slept, they married, they begot or bore children. Such was the Greek's conception of godhead, such his ideal of blessedness. How then should he look forward to the annihilation of the body with any feeling but dismay? How could his hopes of future bliss not involve of necessity a belief in the survival of both body and soul?

I suggest then that the dissolution of the body, which the dead so eagerly desired, far from being regarded as a final and complete severance of soul and body, was in the Pelasgian religion the means of their re-union in another world. Death was only a temporary severance of the two entities which together form a living man capable of enjoying physical pleasures. The soul at the moment of death went down to the nether world in advance, or, it may be, as is sometimes held by the peasants of modern Greece[1], hovered about the body until its dissolution was complete. But the dead body certainly remained in this world, at the place where it lay evident to men's eyes; it could not pass to the other world at once; it could not ever pass thither without the assistance of friends still living; it was too gross and too impotent, bereft of the soul, to make its own way to the home of the dead. Therefore upon the survivors was imposed the sacred charge of resolving it into elements more refined, and of enabling it thus to pass out of human touch and sight to a home which the soul could reach unaided. When this process was effected by inhumation, the period of forty days required for complete dissolution was the critical period in the dead man's existence; if the body was 'bound' and indissoluble for any cause and the soul re-entered it before the proper time, the *revenant* was a pitiable wanderer, sharing in the joys neither of this world nor of the next; the mourners therefore took such measures as they could to prevent that calamity, by entertaining the acquaintances of the dead man and prevailing upon them to revoke any curses wherewith he was bound, and by laying in the dead man's mouth a charm which should bar the soul's re-entry. When cremation was employed, the dissolution of the body was more speedy and more sure; and it is not therefore

[1] Cf. Κωνστ. Ν. Καρελλάκης, Χιακὰ Ἀνάλεκτα, p. 341.

difficult to understand that the Pelasgians, conscious though they must have been that in religion they were as far in advance of the Achaeans as in material civilisation they were behind, should have early adopted the use of fire in the interests of the dead. But no matter which rite was employed, the ultimate effect was the same; the heavy, helpless corpse that had been laid upon the pyre or in the grave vanished, and nought but the bones remained. Whither then had it vanished? How had the visible become invisible? Surely by passing from this visible world to the world invisible. There is nothing to suggest that this disappearance meant to the Greeks annihilation; that word indeed had no counterpart in their speech; the strongest term of the Greek language by which one might attempt, and would still fail, to render the word 'annihilate,' would be *ἀφανίζειν* or *ἀιστοῦν*, 'to make unseen.' And on the other hand their conception of future happiness in another world is positive evidence that they believed dissolution to mean not annihilation, but the vanishing of the body to be re-united with the soul in the unseen world.

I am of course far from suggesting that these views which I have sketched formed a definite religious doctrine to which every Greek would have subscribed. No people have evinced greater liberty of thought on religious matters; no people have been less hampered by hierarchical limitations and the claims of authority; nowhere have wider divergences of religious opinion been tolerated; nowhere else have the advocates of material philosophies and of spiritual philosophies been brought into sharper contrast and yet held in equal repute. But it is not with the vagaries of individuals and the new departures of great thinkers that I am concerned: my purpose is simply to trace the general trend of thought as regards the relation of body and soul after death among the mass of the Greek people.

And in so doing I fully realise the danger of over-statement. Probably the mass of mankind in religious matters perform many acts without full consciousness of their motive; they instinctively follow tradition without enquiring into the meaning and the mutual relation of the customs with which they comply; and if ever they try to justify to their reason the acts to which instinct prompts them, they may be at a loss to form a consistent theory out of the several motives which they would assign to the

several acts. If therefore I try not only to disengage from among the network of religious and philosophical speculation a thread of simple popular belief, but also to present that thread unknotted and continuous, I may be attempting that which the mass of the Greek people seldom and with difficulty performed for themselves. To enunciate as a doctrine that which may have been a sub-conscious or only partially realised belief—to present as a consistent theory ideas which, separately apprehended, formed the acknowledged motives of separate acts, but whose mutual relations were seldom investigated—to formulate in words that which may have been no more than a vague aspiration of men's hearts—this is necessarily to over-state. There lies the danger. But for my part, while admitting that in all probability there was among the Greek people of old, as among the Greek people and others too to-day, a large amount of unintelligent religion, I claim that some such conception as I have outlined of the relation between soul and body and of their future existence is the only possible explanation of the manifold customs and beliefs relating to death and dissolution which have been discussed, and fairly represents the general trend of thought among the inheritors of the Pelasgian religion.

This conclusion is not a little strengthened by the evidence of a custom common to both ancient and modern Greece, which presupposes the continuance of physical desires and needs after death. To make a present of food indicates a belief on the part of the donor that the recipient can eat; to make a present of clothing implies a belief that the recipient has a body to be covered; and it is these two things, food and clothing, the elementary requisites of living men, which have most constantly been brought, either at the time of the funeral or later, as gifts to the dead. Other gifts there were also in different ages; treasures of wrought gold for the princes of Mycenae; articles of the toilet for Athenian ladies whose first care even beyond the grave would be their complexion; toys for the children. But while each grave that is opened may tell its own story, humorous or pathetic, of those tastes and pursuits of the occupant for which the same provision was made in the next world as in this, it is in the supply of the common necessaries of all mankind that the popular Greek notions concerning the dead are most clearly

revealed; for the custom has continued without intermission or sensible alteration down to this day.

In the Mycenaean age the dead were supplied with a store of food at the time of the funeral, but there is no evidence to show whether the gifts were renewed subsequently[1]. I incline to suppose that they were; for the belief of later ages in some sort of bodily existence after death has already been traced back to the Pelasgians; and the custom of later ages therefore of continuing to supply the dead with bodily necessaries was probably derived from the same source. But in any case the Mycenaean custom of providing food for the dead at the time of the funeral is sufficient proof that the dead were thought to have bodily needs, and therefore also bodily existence.

The Achaeans of the Homeric age seldom presented the dead man with gifts of food at the funeral, and never apparently afterwards. The only gift, if such it can be called, which was commonly burned along with the dead body was the warrior's own armour; but it is so natural, quite apart from any religious motive, for a soldier's body to be laid out arrayed in its wonted accoutrements and to have, as it were, a military funeral, that little importance can attach to it. Other gifts were rare. The funeral of Patroclus is quite exceptional, and, like the return of Patroclus' soul with its urgent petition for burial, seems wholly inconsistent with the Homeric presentment of after-death existence. The soul being doomed to a shadowy impotent semblance of life could have no part in physical needs or pleasures[2]. Nor does Homer enlighten us as to the purpose of the abundant gifts, which included not only food but slaughtered dogs and horses[3]; he speaks only of

[1] Rohde (*Psyche* I. cap. 1) contends that the discovery of an altar, of the type used in the worship of Chthonian deities, superimposed upon one Mycenaean grave, proves both that offerings to the dead were continued after the interment and also that the offerings were of a propitiatory character. On this slight foundation he rears the edifice of his theory that a vigorous soul-cult flourished in Mycenaean and earlier ages. Accordingly he views all gifts to the dead, including those made at the time of the funeral, as offerings intended to propitiate departed souls, although he is forced to admit that from the Homeric age onwards there is no evidence that fear of the dead was a feature of Greek religion; the offerings made, on his view, to the soul of Patroclus were merely, he holds, a 'survival,' a custom no longer possessed of any meaning. The accident of an altar belonging to some Chthonian deity having been found above the grave of some man seems to me insufficient basis for any theory.

[2] The blood which in the *Odyssey* is used to attract the souls of the dead and is given to Teiresias to drink forms, I imagine, part of a magic rite, which has no connexion with the present point.

[3] I omit the twelve Trojan prisoners; the slaughter of these is clearly stated to have been an act of revenge. See *Il.* XXIII. 22 f.

providing 'all that it beseemeth that a man should have when he goeth beneath the murky gloom[1].' Indeed I question whether Homer had any clear conception of their utility; they seem rather to have been vaguely honorific; and since the custom of making such gifts is neither usual in Homer nor in harmony with his idea of future existence, I hold it likely that once again he was drawing upon the Pelasgian religion in order to give to the last rites of Patroclus the maximum of splendour.

The Dipylon-period puts an end to all uncertainty; thenceforward down to the present day the Greek custom of providing the dead with the necessaries of bodily life will be found to have been uniform and continuous. There has been no interruption of the simple practice of providing the dead with food both at the time of the funeral and at stated intervals thereafter. For the Dipylon-period this has been proved by the contents of the graves and by the strata of burnt soil observed at Eleusis[2] above them. The same phenomena continue to present themselves also in the case of later graves at Athens, certainly down to the third century B.C., and, though any detailed description of graves of a still later date is hard to find, the custom unquestionably still prevailed; for literary evidence, overlapping that of archaeology at the start, carries on our knowledge of the custom into the Christian era.

The *Choephori* of Aeschylus takes its very name from the practice of pouring wine or other beverages on the graves of the dead for them to consume; and the word *χοαί* was specially applied to this kind of libation as opposed to the *λοιβαί* or *σπονδαί* wherewith gods were propitiated. Similarly the Greek language possessed a special word for gifts of food (or other perishable gifts such as flowers) brought to the graves of the dead; these were called *ἐναγίσματα* in strict contrast with the sacrifices (*θυσίαι*, etc.) by which gods were appeased[3]. These presents of food were regularly made on two occasions at least after the funeral; there were the *τρίτα* brought, according to modern computation, on the second

[1] *Il.* XXIII. 50.

[2] Φίλιος, in Ἐφημερὶς Ἀρχαιολ. 1889, p. 183. Possibly also at Athens, cf. Brückner and Pernice, in *Athen. Mittheil.* 1893, pp. 89—90.

[3] I am not overlooking the fact that *ἐναγίσματα* were also made to Chthonian deities (cf. Pausan. VIII. 34. 3), but there was a distinction in character even between these *ἐναγίσματα* and those made to the dead. Wine, for example, was excluded from the former and included in the latter. Possibly in origin *ἐναγίζειν* was the Pelasgian rite, *θύειν* the Achaean.

day, and the *ἔνατα* on the eighth day: how regular was the custom of bringing them may be judged from the passing references of Aristophanes[1], Isaeus[2], and Aeschines[3]. In addition to these two meals there were others either on the thirtieth day after the funeral or on the thirtieth of each month—for the interpretation to be put on the term *τριακάδες*[4] seems doubtful—also *γενέσια*[5], apparently a birthday-feast given to the dead, and *νεκύσια*[6] to commemorate the anniversary of the death. The exact details of date however are of minor importance; the significant fact is this, that at certain intervals after the well-known *περίδειπνον* or funeral-feast, held on the day of burial, other meals were served to the dead; and the Greek words themselves corroborate the view that 'meals,' not 'sacrifices,' is the right term to use; for as the funeral-feast is *περίδειπνον*, so also the *νεκύσια* are called by Artemidorus[7] not *ἱερὰ* but *δεῖπνα*. These meals, being burnt over the place where the dead body lay, or being deposited unburnt in some large vase set up at the head of the grave, were thereby devoted to the use of the dead and became *ἐναγίσματα* in that curious half-way sense between 'sacred' and 'accursed' for which our language has no equivalent save the imported word 'taboo'—objects devoted to a sacred purpose and bringing the curse of desecration on anyone who should pervert them to another use. The Greek language then was careful to mark the difference between gifts presented to the dead and propitiatory offerings made to the gods; and the difference was observed, not because the presents differed in kind, but because the conceptions of their purposes were different. The gods demanded sacrifices under pain of their displeasure; the dead needed food as living men need it, and their friends supplied it, not in fear, but in love.

These old pagan customs were at first discountenanced by the Church[8]. But the common people clung to them with great tenacity[9], and after a while they appear to have received even

[1] *Lysist.* 611.
[2] *Menecl.* 46 and *Ciron* 55 (p. 73. 26).
[3] *Ctesiphon*, 226 (p. 86. 5).
[4] Pollux VIII. 146; Harpocrat. s.v. *τριακάς*.
[5] Herod. IV. 26.
[6] Artem. *Oneirocr.* IV. 83.
[7] *loc. cit.*
[8] Bingham, *Antiq. of Christian Church*, Bk 23, cap. 3.
[9] See Chrysostom, *Homily* 47 in 1 Cor., p. 565.

official encouragement; for St Anastasius Sinaites, bishop of Antioch during the latter half of the sixth century, enjoined the observance of them, and in so doing used some of the old names by which the customs were known in pre-Christian times. 'Perform,' he wrote, 'the offices of the third day (*τρίτα*) for them that sleep, with psalms and hymns, because of him who rose from sleep on the third day, and the offices of the ninth day (*ἔνατα*) to remind those that yet live of them that have fallen asleep, and the offices of the fortieth day according to the old law and form (for even so did the people mourn for Moses), and the offices of the anniversary in memory of the dead, with gifts from his substance to the poor as a remembrance of him[1].' In this passage the cloak of Christian decency which St Anastasius provided does not entirely cover the nakedness of heathen superstition. There is indeed much aetiological skill in the saint's manipulation of Biblical references; but the *τρίτα* and *ἔνατα* practised in his day, despite the addition of Christian prayers and hymns, were without doubt the same in essence as those to which Aristophanes and others allude—meals provided for the dead; for such indeed they still remain.

At the present day the funeral service usually concludes with a distribution of baked-meats and wine to the company assembled at the grave-side, and a share of both is given to the dead. In some districts this function means more than the serving of light refreshments, and the grave-side becomes the scene of a substantial meal, from which however meat is excluded; for, owing to Christian ideas of fasting, it is generally held to be 'spiritual' for the mourners to abstain from meat for the period of forty days. It is to this meal at the graveside that the word *μακαρία* seems to be properly applied, in the sense of a 'feast of blessing,' and it obviously corresponds with the term *μακαρίτης*, 'blessed,' which was in antiquity, and still remains, the Greek equivalent of our 'deceased' or 'late.'

Subsequently, in the evening after the funeral or even on two or three evenings thereafter, the nearer friends and relatives of the dead assemble for another funeral-feast. This meal, which in ancient times was called the *περιδειπνον*, is now commonly known

[1] Anastasius, *Quaestio* XXII., in Migne, *Patrolog. Graeco-Lat.* Vol. LXXXIX. 288.

as the παρηγορία[1] or 'comforting.' It is held in the house of the nearest relative[2], as was done in the time of Demosthenes[3], and its modern name seems to indicate that the 'consolation' of the bereaved is its chief purpose; and certainly some temporary solace is on many such occasions poured into the mourners' breasts; for the Greek peasants, always abstemious save on certain great festivals such as Easter and these funeral-parties, make no scruple of drinking and pressing their host to drink until a riotous cheerfulness prevails. But though the feast is designed to assuage the grief of the living, the dead are not forgotten; for a special portion of food is often sent to the grave from the house of mourning before the guests of the evening arrive. Thus, though the dead is not felt to have any part in the actual 'feast of comforting'—for this feast is really provided by the guests, who bring their own contributions of food and wine, while the host provides only the accommodation for the company[4] —yet the physical needs of the departed are satisfied on this first day beneath the earth in the same measure as when he was above ground. Two meals are provided, one immediately after the funeral, the other in the evening.

Nor is the nature of this food lacking in interest. Locally indeed many varieties may be found, the gifts including such ordinary comestibles as bread, cheese, olives, caviare of the baser sort, *piláf* (the well-known Turkish dish of which the main ingredients are rice and oil), and probably indeed anything, save meat, which the peasant's larder can supply; but the most generally approved viand is a specially baked flat cake spread with honey. Now it will be remembered that jars of honey were among the gifts of food on the pyre of Patroclus[5], but a more striking coincidence is to be found in Aristophanes' mention of a μελιτοῦττα or honey-cake in connexion with a funeral. 'What,' says Lysistrata mockingly to the old deputy (πρόβουλος), 'what

[1] Known also as τὸ ζεστόν ('the warming') according to Bybilakis, *Neugriech. Leben*, p. 67.

[2] According to Bybilakis, *loc. cit.*, in the dead man's house. This, naturally, would be the usual case.

[3] p. 321. 25.

[4] Hence it is probable that the ancient περίδειπνον also was conducted on the principle of the ἔρανος.

[5] Hom. *Il.* XXIII. 170. Cf. also the use of μελίκρατον, Hom. *Od.* XI. 27, and Eur. *Or.* 115. Cf. also Aesch. *Pers.* 614.

do you mean by not dying? You shall have room to lie; you can buy a coffin; and I myself will knead you a honey-cake at once[1].' From this passage it would appear that not only has the custom of providing food for the dead remained in force from very early days, but even the kind of food has not changed in more than two thousand years. The honey-cake, though no longer known as *μελιτοῦττα*, in reference to its chief attraction, but *ψυχόπηττα*[2], 'soul-cake,' in reference to the occasion of its making, is still apparently prepared according to a classical recipe, and sweetness still gratifies the palate of the dead.

The dates subsequent to the funeral at which food is provided for the dead have already[3] been mentioned. Where the custom is most fully observed, these are the third, sixth, ninth, and fortieth days, the last days of the third, sixth, and ninth months, and three anniversaries, the last of the three being also usually the day for the exhumation of the bones. But in many villages the custom is less extended, and it is held sufficient to observe in this way the third, ninth, and fortieth days[4] and the first anniversary. This minimum of modern practice, it will be observed, is the exact tale of days recommended for observance by St Anastasius, and without doubt the sanction of the Church has helped to preserve the custom.

The Church likewise is wholly responsible for the name by which these days are known, *μνημόσυνα* or 'memorial-feasts'; and it would be wrong to infer therefrom that the peasants attach no meaning to these rites save that which the name 'memorial-feast' suggests. Rather it would seem that the Church in permitting the continuance of a pagan custom tried to diminish its significance. The words of St Anastasius make it clear that such was his attitude. He bids that the anniversary be observed 'in memory of the dead, with gifts from his substance to the poor as a remembrance of him'; and the repetition contained in the phrase shows in what aspect he wished the custom to be viewed. But as a matter of fact the real purpose of the custom was not to keep

[1] Ar. *Lys.* 599 ff.

[2] In some villages of Chios, the diminutive *ψυχοπῆττι* or a word *ψύτση* is used (Κωνστ. Κανελλάκης, Χιακὰ 'Ανάλεκτα, p. 337). The commoner form *ψυχόπηττα* is that of Crete (cf. Bybilakis, *op. cit.* p. 69), Kasos, and other Asiatic islands (Πρωτόδικος, *περὶ τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ταφῆς*, p. 17) etc.

[3] See above, pp. 486—7.

[4] Called respectively *τρίμερα*, *ἐννιάμερα*, and *σαράντα*.

green the memory of the dead by charitable distributions of his goods, but partly, as we have seen, to induce those persons who were invited to the feast to forgive the dead man and to revoke any curses with which they had bound him, and partly to minister to the dead man's own bodily needs; and in spite of ecclesiastical influence to the contrary, this twofold purpose is still generally recognised, and that portion of the food which is not consumed by the company invited or by the priests, but is actually left on the grave, is honestly intended as nourishment for the dead body there interred.

This motive was fully appreciated by a French traveller of the seventeenth century; describing these grave-side feasts, he says, 'Frequent presents of cakes, wine, rice, fruits, and other eatables, decked out with flowers and ribbons, are taken to the tomb.' There, he continues, the priest blesses the food and takes a good share of it, and a feast is then held 'wherein they seek to make the dead man participate as well[1].' Thus even now, after centuries of Christianity, there seems to be no change of feeling among the common-folk, and their intention, or one part of it, is still best summed up in the phrase of Euripides, 'to render sustenance unto the dead[2].'

The food proper to these meals subsequent to the day of the funeral is known as *κόλλυβα*. It consists of grain, usually wheat, boiled whole, and thus closely resembles the English 'frumenty.' It is sometimes garnished and made more palatable by the addition of sugar ornaments, almonds, raisins, and pieces of pomegranate, but the essential thing is boiled grain[3]. How the word *κόλλυβα* obtained this meaning is not known to me[4]; but the food itself is quite probably a legacy from the ancient world. The *silicernium* or funeral-feast of the Romans took its name apparently from *siliquae*, some kind of pulse, which must therefore

[1] Sonnini de Magnoncourt, *Voyage en Grèce et en Turquie*, Vol. II. p. 153.
[2] Eur. *Or.* 109.
[3] Cf. Suidas s.v. *κόλυβα, σῖτος ἐψητός*. The spelling with λλ is preferable.
[4] The classical meaning of *κόλλυβα* was 'small coins.' The scholiast on Aristoph. *Plut.* 768 mentions *κόλλυβα* among the *καταχύσματα* thrown over a new slave on his introduction to the household. These consisted mainly of sweetmeats, etc. (cf. *op. cit.* 798) whence apparently Hesychius (s.v. *κόλλυβα*) explains that word by *τρωγάλια*. More probably small coins were thrown along with various sweetmeats; for the kindred custom of throwing *καταχύσματα* over a bride on her entry into her new home has continued down to the present day, and these certainly now comprise small change as well as sticky edibles.

be supposed to have formed the chief dish; and beans are at the present day an important part of the funeral-meats in Sardinia[1]. It is not unlikely therefore that the use of boiled beans or grain in the service of the dead is an old custom common to the coasts of the Mediterranean. The honey-cake on the day of the funeral is of ancient prescription; the boiled wheat on later occasions may equally well be so. At any rate the principle of supplying the dead with meals both at the funeral and on certain fixed days thereafter remains absolutely unchanged, and the custom is still understood to be a means of ministering to the bodily needs of the dead.

And as with the gifts of food, the ancient *ἐναγίσματα*, so also with the gifts of drink, the ancient *χοαί*. It is on record that among the Greeks of Macedonia, Cappadocia, and other outlying districts[2], the custom of pouring out red wine on the graves of the dead at the so-called memorial-feasts is still sedulously observed; and though I have nowhere witnessed the practice, I have been told on good authority that in Aegina also and in some parts of Crete it is in vogue. For the use of water I can myself answer; and it is not a little interesting to observe that while the dates on which food is set before the dead man have been somewhat conventionally limited in number, water, the prime necessary of life, is often taken to the grave daily[3] up to the fortieth day.

Again, in the matter of providing clothing for the dead, ancient practice is well known. A store of raiment was buried with the dead, and so great a store that it was necessary for Solon to impose a legal limit by which three outer garments (*ἱμάτια*) were named as the maximum[4]. But this restriction applied only to the actual funeral, and did not prohibit renewed gifts of clothing at subsequent dates. To judge from a passage of Thucydides, this was an annual duty. The Plataeans, in their appeal to the Lacedaemonians for protection, are made to plead their performance of this kindness as a claim upon Spartan gratitude. 'Turn your eyes,' they say, 'to the tombs of your fathers, who fell in the Persian wars and were buried in our land. Year by

[1] Gregorovius, *Wanderings in Corsica, etc.* (tr. Muir), II. p. 46.
[2] *Πρωτόδικος, περὶ τῆς παρ' ἡμῖν ταφῆς*, p. 17. Ἰ. Σ. Ἀρχέλαος, *ἡ Σιναστός*, p. 92.
[3] Cf. Bybilakis, *Neugriechisches Leben*, p. 67.
[4] Plutarch, *Vita Solon.* cap. 21.

year we were wont to do them honour at the public charge with gifts of clothing and all else that is customary[1].'

Some vestiges of this custom remain to the present day. The dead are commonly dressed in their best clothes for the lying-in-state and for the procession to the grave, during which, it must be remembered, the body is always carried on an open bier, exposed to view. Often too these clothes are buried with the dead; but sometimes when, as among the poorer peasant-women, the richly-embroidered festival dress is too costly a thing thus to abandon, and is handed down as an heirloom from mother to daughter, the body is stripped at the grave-side of its fine array; and indeed so far, I am told, has the custom degenerated in Athens and some of the other towns, that costumes of special magnificence may be hired from the undertakers and sent back from the churchyard to them. In such cases the old meaning of the custom is lost, and a vulgar desire for pomp and parade has taken its place. But among the simpler folk of the country this is not the case; for, apart from the custom of burying the dead in their best clothes, there is in the folk-songs mention of gifts of clothing and other necessaries of life sent by the hand of one recently dead to those who have gone before[2].

It appears then that the ancient custom of providing for the bodily wants of the departed is still alive, still significant; and surely it is incredible that a people who for more than two thousand years have continued to resort to the graves in which the dead bodies of their friends are laid, and there to set out meat and drink and clothing and other things suited to their erstwhile needs and pursuits, could all along have believed that these gifts were vanity, that the food could not strengthen, the wine could not cheer, the clothing could not warm the departed, but that they lay henceforth cold, tasteless, insentient. For if men had so believed, then a custom, not merely lacking the alliance of religious belief, but standing in perpetual antagonism to it, could not have held its ground, as this custom has done, century after century with vigour unabated. Rather the continuity of the custom might alone prove, even if other considerations had not guided us to the same conclusion, that the departed were held to possess a nature

[1] Thucyd. III. 58. 4.

[2] See above, p. 345.

no less corporeal, an existence no less material, than that which belonged both to living men and to the gods whom they hoped to resemble even more closely hereafter. The same food as men ate was offered to the gods in sacrifice that they too might eat; why bring it to the dead, if they had no power to eat? The wine that men drank was poured out for the gods in libation, that they too might drink; why waste it upon the soil of the grave, if the dead had no power to drink? A robe such as Athenian women wore was presented to Athene year by year, that she might wear it; why furnish the dead with gifts of raiment, if it must rot unworn? It is impossible to evade the conclusion that the same bodily needs and propensities were ascribed by the Greek folk to the departed as to living men and to deathless gods.

Thus then the people of Greece are shown to have pursued constantly two aims in their treatment of the dead—to ensure the dissolution of the body, and also to provide the body with the necessaries of existence. Unless therefore anyone is prepared to suppose that the Greek people have been constantly actuated by two conflicting motives, the desire to annihilate and the desire to keep alive, dissolution cannot have meant to them annihilation, but rather a modification of the conditions of bodily existence; and that modification can only have meant that the existence of the body in this world indeed ended—for the substance laid in the grave vanished—but continued in another world. But if bodily existence continued in that other world whither the soul too sped, the body and the soul having reached the same place would surely not be imagined to remain separate, but to be re-united. The eagerness for dissolution meant therefore eagerness for the re-union of body and soul.

And there is a good means of testing the popular belief even as regards this last step. If the body and soul were really believed to be re-united as soon as dissolution was complete, the dead man in the lower world would assuredly be as well able to take care of himself as he had been while dwelling in this world, and the obligation of his relatives to provide him with food would cease, although of course they might, voluntarily and without any compulsion of duty, continue their gifts[1]. But it would be at any

[1] This occurred in old time in the case of heroes, whose offerings are called *ἐναγίσματα* and *χοαί*, like those of other dead men; but since the state and not the

rate permissible, on this theory, to discontinue all care for the dead when once his body was no longer helpless but restored to its activity by re-union with the soul; and it is to be expected that the Greek people should sometimes avail themselves of the exemption from the task of feeding and otherwise tending the dead. Such action would be the natural outcome of the belief that dissolution meant the re-union of body and soul; and if I can show that such action has been or is commonly taken, the existence of the belief will have borne the best test, the demonstration of a custom arising from it.

The period required for dissolution, according to common belief, is either forty days or three years—the former being the really popular period, while the latter was fixed indeed by the Church but in many districts has been popularly accepted. Hence, if my views are correct, the meals provided for the dead and all other marks of care ought to cease sometimes at the fortieth day and sometimes at the third anniversary.

As regards the present time, I do not know of any place, though it would not surprise me to hear of one, in which the so-called memorial feasts are discontinued after the fortieth day; but I have already cited evidence to show that the memorial-feasts of later date are definitely ecclesiastical in origin, and even retain to this day in one district a distinctly ecclesiastical tone[1]. Therefore before a necessitous priesthood had succeeded in extending the custom, the ministration to the bodily wants of the dead clearly did cease when dissolution was popularly supposed to be complete. This conclusion is fortified by a most striking piece of evidence. The priests' interest has naturally been limited to the food and wine supplied to the dead; for a supply of water they have not been dependent upon the perquisites of their office. Hence it comes that the water, which, as I noted above, is often supplied to the dead day by day, without any accompanying provision of food, ceases to be brought after the fortieth day. The wants of the dead man have been assiduously satisfied until, in popular reckoning, his dissolution is complete, and ecclesiastical influence has had no motive for encouraging a longer continuance of the custom so far

individual provided for them, the gifts were made not for a time only, but regularly year after year.

[1] See above, pp. 487 f.

as water is concerned. The fortieth day then was without doubt the old popular limit of the time during which the supply of all kinds of provision was obligatory.

Nowadays, on the contrary, the presents of food to the dead are generally continued up to the third anniversary, when exhumation takes place. Then, if the evidence of men's eyes assures them that dissolution has been duly effected—that the body is gone and only the white bones remain—there is no further thought or provision for the dead; but in the rare cases in which the disintegration of the corpse is not yet complete, the relatives are not freed from their obligations. I witnessed a remarkable case of this kind at Leonídi on the east coast of Laconia. Two graves had just been opened when I arrived, and the utmost anxiety prevailed because in both cases there was only partial decomposition —in one case so little that the general outline of the features could be made out—and it was feared that one or both of the dead persons had become *vrykolakes*. The remains, when I saw them, had been removed to the chapel attached to the burial-ground. Meanwhile the question was debated as to what should be done with them. Dissolution must be effected both in the interests of the dead themselves and in those of the whole community. Extraordinary measures were required. The best measure—I am reporting what I actually heard—the best measure next to prayer (which had been tried without effect) was to burn the remains, and the bolder spirits of the village counselled this plan; but this would have been a breach of law and order, and the authorities of the place would have none of it. The priest proposed re-interment; but here the relatives objected. They had had trouble enough and expense enough; they had kept 'the unsleeping lamp' burning at the grave, and had provided all the memorial feasts; they would not consent to re-inter the body and to be at the same charge for an indefinite time, without knowing when the corpse might be properly 'loosed' and their tendance of it over. They would find some way of dissolving it, and that speedily.

And so indeed they did; and I, for a short time, was a spectator of the scene. On the floor of the chapel there were two large baskets containing the remains; there were men seated beside them busy with knives; and there were women kneeling at wash-tubs and scouring the bones that were handed to them

with soap and soda. The work continued for two days. At the end of that time the bones were shown white and clean. All else had disappeared—had probably been burnt in secret, but the secret was kept close. It was therefore claimed and allowed that dissolution was complete.

The attitude adopted by the relatives on this occasion makes it perfectly clear that all the care expended on the dead is obligatory up to the time of dissolution, but no longer. So long as the fleshly substance remains in this world, provision of food must be made for it; when it has disappeared and only the bones are left, the departed cease to be dependent upon their surviving relatives, and no further anxiety is felt for their welfare.

Nor must it be supposed that the cleaning and whitening of the bones in the case which I have described had anything to do with a desire to preserve the bones as relics of the dead. Such a custom is indeed well known in Greek monasteries; at Megaspélaeon, for instance, the wealthiest and most famous monastery of Greece proper, there is an ossuary in which the monks take great pride. On one side, ranged against the wall, stands a large triangular heap of skulls; the opposite wall is decorated with cleverly-designed geometrical figures carried out in other bones; while in a corner perhaps may be seen a basket or two full of material awaiting the decorator's convenience. My guide, I remember, pointed out to me the skulls of many of the distinguished monks of past time, and indicated with great satisfaction the spot which he had bespoken for his own. But the usage of monastic bodies has in truth little bearing upon the popular semi-pagan beliefs and customs; the practice of storing up the bones of members of a religious order in an ossuary is more closely akin to the old custom of preserving relics of saints and martyrs; it is to the usage of the common-folk in such matters that we must look. And what do they do with the white or whitened bones? They throw them away and expend no more care upon them. At Leonídi itself, close beside the fenced-in burial-ground, but unprotected from the intrusion of man or beast, there is a square open pit into which the bones of many generations have been tipped like rubbish, lying at random in confusion as they fell. Nor is this a solitary case. In far-away Sciathos I recall the same scene as at Leonídi—a chapel set on a

wooded hill, the churchyard about it neatly kept and the graves of the recently buried well-tended, but just beyond its precincts a rough hole in the ground open to sun and rain, and 'some two fathoms of bones,' as a peasant said jestingly, lying in neglect and disarray. These pits, which are to be seen throughout Greece, are indeed dignified by the Church with the name of cemeteries (*κοιμητήρια*[1]); but they command no respect on the part of the peasant. He will cross himself as he passes chapel or enters churchyard, but he will jest over the depository of outcast bones. In a word, when it is seen that every trace of the dead body save only the white bones has disappeared, the common-folk exchange their extraordinary devotion to the duties of tending the dead for a total unconcern. And the reason for this can only be that the dead body no longer lies helpless and dependent for its existence upon the sustenance which they from time to time provide, but has vanished to a land where, re-united with the soul, it regains its activity and independence.

Such, I believe, is the trend of religious thought which, almost insensibly, has guided the actions of the Greek people from the Pelasgian age until now in their treatment of the dead; the benefit which they have sought to confer upon the dead by the dissolution of their bodies has been the re-union of body with soul and the resumption of that active bodily life which death had for a time suspended.

[1] As opposed, in correct speech, to *νεκροταφεῖον*, the place of preliminary interment. But the two terms are often confused.

# CHAPTER VII.

## THE UNION OF GODS AND MEN.

The similitude of death with sleep is an idea of ancient date and of wide distribution, which for many of mankind, whatever be the creed professed, has mitigated the fears or lightened the uncertainties which attach to the cessation of this life. Adopted by the founder of the Christian religion as an illustration of the doctrine that men 'shall rise again with their bodies,' the thought has become a part of the heritage of Christendom, and in our own language the word 'cemetery' bears testimony to it. But the idea had been evolved by pagan thought long centuries before the dawn of Christianity, and probably enough by the thinkers and poets of many nations independently one of another. In the oldest literature of Greece we meet with the thought already fully developed and evidently familiar. 'To sleep an iron slumber[1]' is already in Homeric language a simple and natural synonym for 'to die'; and so too we are told that in the far off golden age men 'died as it were overborne by sleep[2].' And in yet plainer terms, where Death and Sleep are personified, they are spoken of as twin brethren[3], the children of Night[4]. This conception seems too to have been a favourite in art[5], and provided one of the scenes on the renowned chest of Cypselus[6].

When we turn to the folk-songs of the present day, we cannot of course hope to find the imagery of Death and Sleep pourtrayed as infants sleeping in the lap of Night, nor indeed, so far as I know, are they even described as brothers; for the personification of them by the modern peasants is rare. But the old resemblance

[1] *Il.* xi. 241.
[2] Hes. *W. and D.* 116.
[3] e.g. Hom. *Il.* xvi. 454 and 672; xiv. 231.
[4] Hes. *Theog.* 212, 756.
[5] See Preller, *Griech. Myth.* i. 690 ff.
[6] Paus. v. 18. 1. Cf. iii. 18. 1.

between them is still recognised, and, quite apart from Christian influence, the thought finds natural expression in those largely pagan improvisations of mourning in which the name of Charon is to be heard more frequently than the name of God. It will suffice to quote but one stanza from one of the most simple and touching of these funeral-songs:

δὲν εἶν' πεθαμένη,
τὴν ὄψι τηρᾶτε,
κοιμᾶται, κοιμᾶται,
εἰς ὕπνο βαθύ[1].

Not dead lies the maiden,
Doubt not, but behold her,
'Tis sleep doth enfold her
In slumber profound.

Now this idea, born in some long-forgotten pagan age, fostered by Homer and Hesiod and no less tenderly by the Christian Church, familiar to every Greek mind for full three thousand years, harmonizes well with the belief that body as well as soul survives death. Beyond the superficial resemblance in the inert figures of the dead man laid out for burial and of one who sleeps soundly, there was another and profounder resemblance in the manner of their waking to fresh activity, the one in this world, the other in the under-world. Homer, with his belief that the soul alone survives, notes only the first resemblance. The twofold property of laying men to sleep and of raising them therefrom resided fitly in the wand of Hermes the escorter of the dead; but though he escorted men's souls to the house of Hades and might at will summon their souls thence[2], there is no suggestion of a bodily awakening from the sleep of death. But Virgil, even in his close imitation of Homer, adds to the Homeric description of Hermes' wand one phrase of his own. 'Therewith doth he summon forth from Orcus the pale spirits of the dead, and others doth he send down to gloomy Tartarus; therewith he giveth sleep and taketh it away'—so far does Virgil follow Homer, but he adds—'and unsealeth men's eyes from death[3].' The Homeric picture is enriched by a new thought, foreign to the Achaean religion but proper to that other belief which inspired Pindar's description of the future life, the thought that after death and dissolution men's

[1] Passow, *Popul. Carm.* CCCXCVI.
[2] Hom. *Od.* XXIV. 1.
[3] Virg. *Aen.* IV. 242 ff.

eyes should open upon a brighter world and a life of renewed bodily activity.

Such was the thought with which the pagans of ancient Greece had comforted themselves long before Christianity availed itself of the same imagery. But the Hellenic religion went yet further, and found in this thought not only peace and contentment but vivid joy. The sleep of death was the means whereby men should attain to closer communion with their gods. The grave was a bed, but a bed of delight rather than of rest, a bridal bed. They should not sleep alone, but in the very embrace of the gods to whom in this life they had striven to draw nigh. The darkness of the tomb was but the wedding-night. Full union in the other world should be the consummation of partial communion in this. The marriage of men with their gods was the ideal to which Greek piety dared aspire.

Such an ideal may well seem bold even to the verge of impious presumption. But Greek religion, even in its highest developments, was the natural and spontaneous expression of the beliefs and hopes of a whole people; it differed from all the great religions of the modern world in having no founder. Great teachers no doubt arose, as Orpheus or Pythagoras, who influenced the course of religious thought; but they were not the founders of new religions. The old self-grown faiths of the people were the stocks upon which they grafted, as it would seem, even their new doctrines; they founded schools indeed, but schools which did not sever themselves from the received religion and become sects. The Orphic mysteries differed so little from the old Pelasgian mysteries of Eleusis that Orpheus was sometimes even reputed to be their founder too; yet, as we shall see, the Eleusinian rites were merely one presentment of a conception common to the whole Greek people. If then this ideal of marriage between men and gods in the future life was no invented or imported doctrine, but simply the highest development of purely popular aspirations towards close communion with the gods, its audacity is less surprising. From time immemorial down to this day[1] Greece has had its popular stories of nuptial union even in this life between gods and mortal women, between goddesses and mortal men; and educated Greeks, who could not credit such occurrences in

[1] See above, pp. 96 ff. and pp. 134 ff.

their own times, might well believe that a joy, which had been granted to the brave men and fair women of a former and better age even during their life-time upon earth, was still reserved for the righteous in the world to come. Pausanias tells us with a wonderful simplicity that in his time owing to the increase of iniquity in all the world no one was changed from a man into a god, and that the wrath of the gods against the unrighteous was laid up against the time when they should quit this earth[1]. If then there was believed to be a postponement of punishment for those who offended the gods, there might well be a reservation of blessedness for those who pleased them. It would have imposed no strain upon the faith of such as Pausanias to look forward to the enjoyment in a future life of the same bliss as had been enjoyed in old time upon earth by men 'who by reason of their uprightness and piety sat at the same hospitable board as gods, and whom the gods openly visited with honour for their goodness even as they visited the wicked with their displeasure[2],' men who, as many an old legend told, had shared not the board only but even the bed of deities.

This curious Greek conception of death as a form of marriage was first borne in upon me by the funeral-dirges of the modern peasants. Examples may be found in any collection of Greek folk-songs. The actual expression of the thought varies considerably, but it would probably be hard to find in Greece any professional mourner in whose elaborations the idea did not occupy an important place. It is utilised with equal frequency in regard to persons of either sex, whether married or unmarried at the time of death. The two following specimens from Passow's collection are fairly representative.

'Ah me! ah me! the hours of youth and days all past and over,
Haply shall they return again, those hours of youth regretted?'
'Nay when the crow dons plumage white, when crow to dove is changèd,
Then only shall they come again, those hours of youth lamented.'
'Oh fare ye well, high mountain-tops and fir-trees rich in shadow,
For I must go to marry me, to take a wife unto me;
The black earth for my wife I take, the tombstone as her mother
And yonder little pebbles all her brethren and her sisters[3].'

Here evidently we have the funeral-dirge of an old man, and, as is usual in these poems, a large part of the words are

[1] Paus. VIII. 2. 5.
[2] Paus. *ibid.* § 4.
[3] Passow, *Pop. Carm.* no. 364.

put into his mouth. In this fragment the first two lines are the dead man's complaint, the next two are an answer returned to him, and then again he takes up his parable. The second example which I will give is from a lamentation for a young girl. The first few lines are addressed by the father and mother to their dead child, and with a quaint directness contrast the gloom of the lower world with the simple joys of a peasant's life here above; while the last three lines are an answer put into the dead girl's mouth.

'Dear child, there where thou purposest to hie thee down, in Hades,
There, sure, no cock doth ever crow, nor hen is heard a-clucking,
There is no spring of water found, nor grass in meadows growing.
Art hungered? nought thou tastest there; athirst? there nought thou drinkest;
Would'st lay thee down and take thy rest? of sleep no fill thou takest.
Then stay, dear child, in thine own house, stay then with thine own kindred.'
'Nay, I may not, dear father mine and mother deep-beloved,
Yesterday was my marriage-day, late yestere'en my wedding,
Hades I for my husband have, the tomb for my new mother[1].'

In this dirge, it may be noticed, there is no complaint on the part of the dead girl; the lamentation and the gloomy description of Hades are assigned to her parents. And indeed her reply is, I think, intended to be by way of consolation. It is true that she does not deny their cheerless prognostications nor attempt to paint a brighter picture of the nether world, but she represents her death as no greater breaking of old ties than is marriage; at an actual marriage indeed the same kind of distressful presages are chanted by the girl's companions, and even the bride herself is bound by propriety to exhibit a sullen and regretful demeanour. Very true of Greek marriages and of Greek funerals is the proverb, *μηδ' ἀπὸ τὴ λύπη λείπουν γέλια μηδ' ἀπὸ τὴ χαρὰ τὰ κλάμματα*[2], 'Mourning hath its mirth and joy its tears.' But the consolatory tone is far more pronounced in some other passages from the same collection. A good example is found in the message which a *Klepht*—one of those patriot-outlaws who struggled against Turkish domination—is made to send, as he lies dying, to his mother:

[1] Passow, *Pop. Carm.* no. 374.
[2] The word *χαρὰ* ('joy'), as I have pointed out elsewhere, is indeed often used technically of marriage.

'Go, tell ye now my mother dear, my mother sore-afflicted,
Ne'er to await me home again, ne'er to abide my coming;
Yet tell her not that I am slain, tell her not I am fallen;
Nay, tell her then that I am wed—wed in these wilds so weary.
The black earth for my wife I took, the hard rock my bride's mother,
And all the little pebbles here I took for my new kindred[1].'

The feeling displayed in these lines (which are credited by Passow to the town of Livadia (Λεβαδεία) in Boeotia) finds closely similar expression in a recently-published Macedonian folk-song. The latter however is not a mere copy of the former. Its metre is different, and further it is a folk-song of the romantic order, whereas the lines which I have quoted belong to an historical ballad. A youth is lowered by his brothers, so runs the story, into a well to get water for them, but the well proves to be haunted by a snake-like monster (στοιχειό[2]) from whom they try in vain to rescue him. In this plight he cries to them:

'Oh leave me, brothers, leave me, go ye on your way,
And say not to my mother dear that I am dead,
But tell her, brothers, tell her how that I am wed;
The black earth for my wife I took, the tombstone my bride's mother,
And all these little blades of grass her brethren and her sisters[3].'

Even more remarkable in its total absence of grief is a fragment given by Passow under the title of 'the Wedding in Hades.' The lamentation—for technically at least the poem falls into the class of 'dirges'—is sung by a mother for her son, and she speaks of her own mother, who is already dead and in the nether world, as making preparation for the boy's wedding in Hades.

'My mother maketh glad to-day, she maketh my son's wedding,
She goeth for water to the springs, for snow unto the mountains,
To fruit-wives in their garden-plots for apples and for quinces.
"Ye springs," she saith, "give water cool, and give me snow, ye mountains,
Ye fruit-wives in your garden-plots, give apples and give quinces.
For unto me a dear one comes down from the world above us;
Not from a strange land cometh he, nor from among strange people,
He is the child of mine own child, right dear and deep-beloved."[4]'

From these passages and from many others conceived in the same spirit it will readily be seen that the thought of death as a kind of marriage, however mystical it may seem to us, is familiar to the modern Greek peasants. Nor has that thought become

[1] Passow, *Pop. Carm.* no. 38 (ll. 13—18) and also nos. 65, 152, 180.
[2] See above, pp. 255 ff.
[3] Abbott, *Macedon. Folklore*, p. 255.
[4] Passow, *Pop. Carm.* no. 370. The phrase κάνει χαρά, which I have inadequately rendered as 'maketh glad,' is technically used of marriage. See above, p. 127.

crystallised into a set form of words to be repeated without heed or understanding of their meaning. The very variety of treatment given to the idea proves that we are not dealing with a mere traditional expression or unmeaning commonplace, but with a vital belief still capable of stirring the ballad-maker's imagination. Further it is this thought which almost alone strikes a note of cheerfulness and of hope in the popular dirges. The usual picture of the lower world is nothing but gloom and despair. It is a place of darkness on which the sun never shines, a place of ice and snow, and full of cob-webs. There are no churches there with bright golden icons; no quoits for the young men to throw; no looms for the women to ply. Hunger is not appeased, thirst not quenched, and sleep is denied. All is mourning and regret for the warm stirring life of the upper world, and anxious fears for wife or children left behind. Happy those who are allowed even to taste of the river of death, and to forget their homes and orphaned little ones. Thus with strange medley of ancient and modern is the dirge-singer wont to describe that lower world to which all the dead without distinction go. Yet even into these dirges, which—in order to excite the mourners to wilder displays of grief—purposely emphasize the gloomiest aspects of death, there is allowed to enter the one cheering thought that the departed for whom lamentation is made is not dead nor yet fallen on eternal sleep, but wedded in a new world; and it is worthy of notice that it is with this thought that many of the dirges end, as if this one consolation and hope were designed to assuage the pangs of sorrow which the first part of the dirge had excited.

Thus a brief study of the modern Greek dirges reveals to us the curious fact that a mystic conception of death is widely prevalent among the simple-minded peasants of Greece, and that, with all their *naïveté* in pourtraying the horrors of the lower world, it is from a recondite doctrine that they draw consolation. How came they to be the stewards of a doctrine so strange, so remote from the primitive simplicity of their ordinary life?

Once more we must look back to a pre-Christian antiquity, and seek again in Greek Tragedy the evidence of popular belief. Just as Aeschylus above all others has preserved to us the awful doctrine of future retribution for the deadly sin of blood-guilt, so from Sophocles we may learn the more comfortable doctrine

that death, while it involves a parting from friends in this upper world, is also the means of drawing nearer, in an union as it were of wedlock, to the denizens of the lower world. The *locus classicus* for this conception is the *Antigone*. Throughout the latter part of that play, when once the doom of Antigone has been pronounced, the thought of her death as a wedding, and of the rock-hewn tomb where she is to be immured as a bridal-chamber, finds repeated and emphatic expression.

Of course it may be said that Antigone was the promised bride of Haemon, and that the poet in speaking of her tomb as a bridal-chamber was seeking to accentuate the pathetic contrast between her hopes and her destiny. That is true; but perhaps it is not the whole truth; perhaps Sophocles rather utilised the evident pathos of the situation for the purpose of covert allusion to doctrines which were in themselves unspeakable, such as Herodotus would have passed over with the words *εὔστομα κείσθω*. For we must not forget that the majority of an Athenian audience, initiated as they naturally would be in the Eleusinian mysteries, were familiar with religious teachings of which none might make explicit mention in the pages of literature open to the profane, but at which a poet might well hint in words which beneath their superficial meaning hid a truth intelligible to such as had ears to hear. Aeschylus indeed had once ventured too far in his allusions to the mysteries[1]; but there is no improbability, or rather there is on that account an increased probability, in the supposition that a discreet and veiled allusion to unspeakable doctrines was permitted to the Tragic poet. Let us turn to the actual passages of the *Antigone*.

The first suggestion of the thought comes ironically enough, though it is but a faint suggestion, from the lips of Creon, who to Ismene's exclamation, "Wilt thou indeed bereave thine own son of her?" retorts "'Tis Hades' part to arrest this wedding[2]." The thought is taken up later by the Chorus, who, after their hymn in honour of unconquerable Love, revert to words of pity

[1] For authorities see Lobeck, *Aglaoph.* I. pp. 76 ff.

[2] Soph. *Antig.* 574–5. I do not know how much stress may be laid on the repetition of the pronoun *ὅδε* in these two lines (viz. *στερήσεις τῆσδε* and *τούσδε τοὺς γάμους*); but the lines follow closely on that in which Creon bids Ismene speak no more of Antigone as *ἥδε*, and an ironical stress might well be laid by Creon on the word *τούσδε* as he uses it, which would suggest to his audience its antithesis *τοὺς ἐκεῖ γάμους*.

for the woman there before them, and tell how they can no longer check the founts of tears, when they behold Antigone drawing near to 'the bed-chamber where all must sleep' (*τὸν παγκοίταν θάλαμον*)[1]. Here the expression of the idea is becoming plainer, and it is no accident that the word *θάλαμος*, so commonly used of the bride-chamber, is here selected. But yet clearer words are to follow; for Antigone herself, in response to these words of compassion from the Chorus, interprets more boldly that at which they hint. 'Me doth Hades, with whom all must sleep, bear off yet alive to Acheron's shore, me that have had no part in wedlock, whose name hath never rung forth in bridal hymn, but 'tis Acheron I shall wed[2].'

Nor does this clear pronouncement stand alone; thrice more, as the play advances, the same thought is echoed in unmistakeable tones. First comes the opening of that half impassioned, half sophistic, speech of Antigone, from which some critics would delete her argumentative estimate of a brother's claims as against those of a husband; but the removal of those lines would still leave intact that outburst, 'Oh tomb, oh bride-chamber, oh cavernous abode of everlasting durance[3].' And then again in the speech of the messenger, who bears tidings of the fate of both Antigone and her lover, the same thought is pressed upon us with double insistence. First he tells how, having given Polynices his full rites of burial, they turned to go next 'unto the vaulted chamber where on couch of rock the maiden should be wed with Hades' (*πρὸς λιθόστρωτον κόρης νυμφεῖον Ἄιδου κοῖλον*), and from afar is heard the voice of loud lament beside 'the bridal chamber unhallowed by funeral rites' (*ἀκτέριστον ἀμφὶ παστάδα*[4]). And later in the same narrative, when we have heard how that voice of loud lament was stilled, Haemon is pictured as lying dead in Antigone's dead embrace, having won his bridal's fulfilment only in Hades' house (*τὰ νυμφικὰ τέλη λαχὼν δείλαιος ἐν γ' Ἄιδου δόμοις*)[5].

The reiteration of a single thought through all this series of passages is most remarkable. What does it mean? Did Sophocles intend merely to enhance the tragedy of Antigone's

[1] Soph. *Antig.* 804–5.
[2] *ibid.* 810–16.
[3] *ibid.* 891–2.
[4] *ibid.* 1203–7.
[5] *ibid.* 1240–1.

doom by constant comparison of that which might have been with that which was? Or did each phrase in which the thoughts of marriage and of death were blended contain a further and a subtler appeal to his hearers' emotions? Did each phrase strike also a note which set vibrating in his listeners' hearts responsive chords of mystic hope?

For my part, as I draw near the end of these studies in Greek religion, I find it more and more difficult to set down as mere casual coincidences the close resemblances between Greece in the past and Greece in the present. I have found a belief in the supernatural beings of Ancient Greece still swaying the minds of the modern peasants; I have seen the customs of antiquity repeated alike in the small acts of every-day life and in the ceremonies of its greater events; I have heard the same thoughts expressed in almost the same turns of phrase as in ancient literature; I have traced the popular conceptions of the present day concerning the relations of body and soul, and their existence after death, back to native pre-Christian sources. Have I then not a right, am I not bound, to abjure coincidence and to claim for the past and the present real identity? When I find in Sophocles the same thought, almost the same words, which may be gathered to-day from the lips of any unlettered lament-maker the whole Greek world over, I am compelled by my conviction of the continuity of all things Greek to believe that Sophocles adapted to his own use a thought which in his time even as now was uttered in many a funeral-dirge, and that while the phrases of the *Antigone* gained in his hands a new lustre from the pathos of their setting, they themselves were not new nor the invention of Sophocles' genius, but an old heritage of the Greek race. Maybe it was that same thought which gave birth to the strange and but partially known legend of the death of Hymenaeus himself in the first moment of his wedded delight[1]; maybe it was in the same spirit that Prometheus foretold how Zeus himself should make such a marriage as should cast him down from his throne of tyranny and he be no more seen, in fulfilment of the curse uttered by Cronos when he was cast down into the unseen world[2].

[1] Pindar, *Fragm.* 139 (Bergk).

[2] Aesch. *Prom.* 940 ff.

But, it may be said, the forebodings of Prometheus are generally taken to refer to a future marriage with Thetis, not with death; and Pindar's reference to Hymenaeus is vague and fragmentary; and the lines of Sophocles' *Antigone* have plenty of human pathos, without reading into them any religious doctrine; let your contention at least have the support of sober prose which shows its meaning on the surface. So be it. Artemidorus in his hand-book to the interpretation of dreams claims as a recognised religious principle the correlation of marriage and death. To dream of the one is commonly a prognostication of the other. But let us hear his own words. "If an unmarried man dream of death, it foretells his marriage; for both alike, marriage and death, have universally been held by mankind to be 'fulfilments' (τέλη); and they are constantly indicated by one another; for the which reason also if sick men dream of marriage, it is a foreboding of death[1]." And again: 'if a sick person dream of sexual intercourse with a god or goddess....., it is a sign of death; for it is then, when the soul is near leaving the body which it inhabits, that it foresees union and intercourse with the gods[2].' And yet once more: 'since indeed marriage is akin to death and is indicated by dreaming of death, I thought it well to touch upon it here. If a sick man dreams of marrying a maiden, it is a sign of his death; for all the accompaniments of marriage are exactly the same as those of death[3].' The gist of these passages is unmistakeable; in clear and straightforward terms is enunciated the principle that death and marriage are so intimately associated that to dream of the one may portend the happening of the other. Here is the doctrine which we sought to elicit from the poetry of Sophocles and from the dirges of modern peasants, stated in plain prosaic language. Death is akin to marriage, and, as death approaches, men's souls foresee a wedded union with gods.

But Artemidorus does not merely vouch for the existence of this mystic doctrine; he suggests also, to those who will weigh his words, that the doctrine was generally recognised and widely-

[1] *Oneirocr.* II. 49. The word τέλη denotes here not merely a 'rite,' but a 'consummation' by which a man becomes τέλειος. See below, p. 591.

[2] *ibid.* I. 80. To translate the passage more fully is not convenient; I append the original: θεῷ δὲ ἢ θεᾷ μιγῆναι ἢ ὑπὸ θεοῦ περανθῆναι νοσοῦντι μὲν θάνατον σημαίνει· τότε γὰρ ἡ ψυχὴ τὰς τῶν θεῶν συνόδους τε καὶ μίξεις μαντεύεται, ὅταν ἐγγὺς ᾖ τοῦ καταλιπεῖν τὸ σῶμα ᾧ ἐνοικεῖ.

[3] *ibid.* II. 65.

spread: 'for all the accompaniments of marriage,' he says, 'are exactly the same as those of death.' What were these accompaniments? Seemingly Artemidorus had in mind certain customs which he had enumerated a little earlier, namely 'an escort of friends, both men and women, and garlands and scents and unguents and an inventory of goods[1]' (i.e. either the marriage settlement or the last will and testament). It is then owing to this similarity between marriage-customs and funeral-customs that 'if a sick man dreams of marrying a maiden, it is a sign of death.' But previously we heard that if a sick person dreamt of commerce with a god or goddess, it was a sign of death, because, as death approached, the soul foresaw union and intercourse with the gods. How far do these statements agree? In both cases the interpretation of the dream is the same—to dream of marriage forebodes death—while the reasons for that interpretation are differently given according as the partner in the dreamt-of union is divine or human. But, though differently given, these reasons are not mutually inconsistent. In the one case the reason assigned is an idea—the idea that by death men were admitted to wedded union with their gods. In the other case the reason assigned is a custom—the custom of giving to the dead rites similar to the marriage-rites. In effect then the two reasons assigned are one and the same in spirit; for the 'custom' is merely the practical expression of the 'idea'; it was because men believed that the dead attained to a wedded union with their gods, that they made the funeral-rites resemble the rites of marriage. And clearly this custom of assimilating the accompaniments of death to those of marriage could never have been general, as Artemidorus suggests, unless the belief, on which that custom was founded, had also been generally received and widely spread.

It will be worth while then to institute an enquiry into the customs generally observed both in ancient and modern times at weddings and at funerals. Our comparison of ancient literature with modern folk-songs, illumined by the statements of Artemidorus, has established the fact that death and marriage were very intimately associated in thought by some of the ancient writers as they are by many of the modern peasants. Custom will be found to tell the same tale, and will prove how generally

[1] *Oneirocr.* II. 49.

accepted was this idea. For in point after point which Artemidorus does not mention in his brief enumeration—and without reckoning, as he does, such purely business matters as the inventory of goods—we shall find that the ceremonies incidental to a funeral have now, and had in old time, a curiously close resemblance to the ceremonies incidental to marriage; and, so finding, we may be confident that they were informed by a general and wide-spread belief that to die was but to marry into Hades' house. Let us review them briefly and in order[1].

The first ceremony in both functions alike was, and is, a solemn ablution. Before a Greek wedding both bride and bridegroom have always been required to bathe themselves, usually in water specially fetched from some holy spring. At Athens in old time, according to Thucydides, the spring frequented for this purpose was Callirrhoë[2]; and similarly the Thebans had resort to the Ismenus[3], the maidens of the Troad to the Scamander[4], and the inhabitants of other districts to some spring or river of local repute[5]. And at the present day in Athens it is still from Callirrhoë (when there is any water there) that the poorer classes fill the bridal bath; while many a village has its own sacred well or fountain (*ἅγιασμα*) to which recourse is regularly had for this same purpose. And this wedding-ablution, common, as it would thus appear, to the Greeks of all ages, has its counterpart in the funeral-ablution, a ceremony likewise observed in all ages. Thus Sophocles makes Antigone speak of having washed with her own hands the dead bodies of father, mother, and brother[6]; and Lucian in a mocking tone refers to the same practice as general in his day[7]. At the present day the same rite is practically universal in Greece. In some places, and most notably in Crete, special magnificence is given to the ceremony by the use of warm wine instead of water; in others, as Macedonia[8], the custom has dwindled away, and all that remains of it is a perfunctory moistening of the dead man's face with a piece of cotton-wool soaked in wine. But in general the old custom remains unchanged. Thus

[1] The majority of the references to ancient usage given below are borrowed from Becker's *Charicles*.

[2] Thuc. II. 15.

[3] Eur. *Phoen.* 347.

[4] Aeschines, *Epist.* x. p. 680.

[5] Cf. Pollux, III. 43.

[6] Soph. *Antig.* 901.

[7] *De Luctu*, 11.

[8] Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 193.

we see that from ancient times down to the present day a ceremony of ablution has held a place in the preliminaries alike of a marriage and of a funeral.

Again in this matter of washing there is one detail of special interest. The water for the bridal bath was in old times fetched by a boy or girl[1] closely related to the bride or the bridegroom, and the λουτροφόρος, as the bearer was called, is still an important figure in the wedding ceremonial of the present day. Nowadays, so far as I know, the bearer is always a boy, and further it is essential that both his parents be still living. The λουτροφόρος therefore has always been closely associated with the marriage-rite. But in antiquity the same water-bearer appears in another connexion. 'It was customary,' we hear, 'to fetch water (λουτροφορεῖν) also for those who died unmarried, and that the figure of a water-bearer (λουτροφόρον) should be set up over their tomb. The figure was that of a boy with a pitcher[2].' Here we have a clear case of the importation of a ceremony closely connected with marriage into the funeral-rites of the unmarried. How are we to explain this custom? On what religious conception was it based? Clearly, it seems,—in view of that constant association of death and marriage which we have observed in ancient literature and modern folk-song—no other interpretation can well be maintained than that, for those who died unwed, death itself was the first and only marriage which they experienced, and that to such, ere they were laid in Hades' nuptial-chamber, there ought to be given those same rites which were held to be a fitting preparation for entrance into the estate of wedlock in this world[3].

The ceremonial ablutions being concluded, there came next the

[1] For a discussion of this point see Becker, *Charicles* pp. 483–4.

[2] Harpocrat. s.v. λουτροφόρος. ἔθος δὲ ἦν καὶ τοῖς ἀγάμοις ἀποθανοῦσι λουτροφορεῖν, καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ μνῆμα ἑφίστασθαι. τοῦτο δὲ ἦν παῖς ὑδρίαν ἔχων. The same words are repeated by Photius and Suidas. With ἑφίστασθαι it appears necessary to supply λουτροφόρον. Cf. Pollux VIII. 66 τῶν δ' ἀγάμων λουτροφόρος τῷ μνήματι ἑφίστατο, κόρη ἀγγεῖον ἔχουσα ὑδροφόρον.... For other references see Becker, *Charicles* p. 484. This information, as regards the emblem used, is held to be incorrect. The λουτροφόρος was not a boy bearing a pitcher, but the pitcher itself. See Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. v. p. 388.

[3] For this view see Frazer, *Pausanias*, vol. v. p. 389. 'It may be suggested that originally the custom of placing a water-pitcher on the grave of unmarried persons...may have been meant to help them to obtain in another world the happiness they had missed in this. In fact it may have been part of a ceremony designed to provide the dead maiden or bachelor with a spouse in the spirit land. Such ceremonies have been observed in various parts of the world by peoples, who, like the Greeks, esteemed it a great misfortune to die unmarried.'

rites of anointing and arraying whether for marriage or for burial. As regards the cosmetics, we might feel well assured, even without the direct testimony of Aristophanes[1], that they were freely used in ancient weddings; and I myself have experienced a sense of suffocation from the same cause at weddings in modern Greece. Similarly at ancient funerals the original purpose of the *lecythi* was without doubt to contain the choice perfumes for the anointing of the dead[2]; and the custom of anointing is still well known. Then again in the matter of dress, the colour usually considered correct[3] both for marriage and for burial was white, and, even if this cannot be said to have been universally the case, at any rate there was, and there still continues to be, no less pomp and ornament in the dress of the dead body[4] than in the array of bride and bridegroom.

In this connexion too we may notice the use of the actual bridal-dress in the funerals of betrothed girls and of young wives. That this practice was known in antiquity is proved by a passage of Chariton[5], in which the heroine of his story, Callirrhoë, whose first adventure, soon after her wedding, consists in being carried out to burial while unconscious but not dead, is described as 'dressed in bridal array'; and exactly the same custom may be witnessed in Greece to-day[6]. In fact not only may the person of the dead be seen dressed as for a wedding, but in the folk-songs we hear of the tomb itself being adorned like the home to which the bride should have been led.

'Came her lover to her bedside, stooped him down, and met her kiss;
Low and faint to his ear only, whispered she, her message this:
"When I pass away, my lover, deck thou out my tomb for me,
As thou would'st have decked the home where wedded I should dwell with thee[7]."'

Yet another point of coincidence between the ceremonial of marriage and of funeral is the wearing of a crown. In ancient times 'chaplets,' says Becker[8], 'were certainly worn both by bride and bridegroom,' and in modern usage they are as essential to

[1] *Plut.* 529.
[2] Cf. Lucian, *de Luctu* 11.
[3] For a discussion of the point in relation to funerals see Becker, *Charicles* pp. 385 f. and in relation to marriage pp. 486 f.
[4] Lucian, *de Luctu* 11.
[5] I. 6.
[6] Cf. Passow, *Popul. Carm. Graec. Recent.* no. 415, and Tournefort, *Voyage du Levant*, I. p. 153, who describes a dead woman, whose funeral he witnessed, as 'parée à la Gréque de ses habits de nôces.'
[7] Passow, *Popul. Carm.* 378.
[8] *Charicles* p. 487.

the marriage ceremony as the wedding-rings. At a certain point in the service, it is the duty of the best man, assisted by the chief bridesmaid, to keep exchanging the rings from the hands of the bride and bridegroom, and in like manner to exchange the crowns which they wear from the head of one to the head of the other; and as the rings are always worn afterwards, so the two crowns are carefully preserved and hung up together in the new home. Equally well-established is the use of garlands in ancient funerals[1], and, if not quite universal at the present day[2], they are at any rate commonly employed in the funerals of women and children. In Macedonia it is actually the bridal crown which is worn for burial by anyone who was betrothed or newly married[3].

Worthy of notice too is the not uncommon spectacle of an apple, quince[4], or pomegranate laid among the flowers with which the bier is adorned; for all these three fruits have their special significance in relation to marriage. The classical custom of throwing an apple into a girl's lap as a sign of love is a method of wooing still known to the rustic swain. It is not indeed regarded as a highly respectable method, but perhaps neither in old times was it so; for then, as now, the more well-conducted youths seem to have had their wooing, if such it may be called, carried on through the agency of an elderly lady (in ancient Greek *προμνήστρια*, in modern *προξενήτρια*) whose negotiations were chiefly addressed to the parents on either side, and whose conversation smacked more of dowry than of love. The quince and the pomegranate however are employed without any offence to propriety. The former is in some districts the food of which the newly-married pair are required to partake together at their first entry into their new home; and it is hoped that the sweetness of the fruit will so temper their lips that nothing but sweet words will ever be addressed by the one to the other. To the open-minded observer it might appear that acidity rather than sweetness was the chief characteristic of the quince, and that, if the qualities

[1] Lucian, *de Luctu* 11. Aristoph. *Lysist.* 602 etc.

[2] The influence of the Church was against the use of garlands in early times and perhaps suppressed it in some districts. Cf. Minucius, p. 109 'Nec mortuos coronamus. Ergo vos (the heathen) in hoc magis miror, quemadmodum tribuatis exanimi aut [non] sentienti facem aut non sentienti coronam: cum et beatus non egeat, et miser non gaudeat floribus.' The first *non* is clearly to be deleted.

[3] Cf. Abbott, *Macedonian Folklore*, p. 193.

[4] Cf. *ibid.* p. 197.

of the fruit are found to affect the tones of those who eat it, they would be better advised, as is the custom in some villages, to substitute for the quince a well-sugared cake or a dish of honey. But the pomegranate is far more commonly used than the quince, and in a variety of ways. Sometimes the bride and bridegroom eat together of it; elsewhere the bridegroom proffers it to the bride as his first gift on her entrance to their home, and she alone eats of it; or again she may be required to hurl it down and scatter its seeds over the floor. The second of these methods of using the pomegranate at marriage is, it will be remembered, of venerable antiquity; it was a seed of this fruit which Hades gave to Persephone to eat, that when she visited again the upper world she might not remain there all her days with reverend, dark-robed Demeter, but return to her home in the nether world[1]; and similarly at the Argive Heraeum, the bride of Zeus was represented by Polyclitus holding in one of her hands the fruit of the pomegranate, concerning which, says Pausanias, there is a mystic story not to be divulged[2]. Here again then is found the same close association of death and marriage. The three fruits, apple, quince, and pomegranate, each of which possesses a special use and purport in the preliminaries or the actual ceremony of marriage, are also the fruits most commonly laid upon the bier, in token, as it must appear, that death is but a marriage into the unseen world. In the light of such customs we can read with fuller understanding that simple and yet mystic dirge, 'The Wedding in Hades':

> 'My mother maketh glad to-day, she maketh my son's wedding,
> She goeth for water to the springs, for snow unto the mountains,
> To fruit-wives in their garden-plots for apples and for quinces...[3].'

Thus in point after point the rites of marriage and the rites of death among Greeks both past and present have been found to coincide; and the number of these points of coincidence is too large to admit of their being referred to accident; design is evident. We are bound to suppose either that marriage-ceremonies were deliberately transferred to the funeral-rite, or that funeral-ceremonies were deliberately transferred to the marriage-

[1] Hom. *Hymn. in Demet.* 372 ff. Hence the pomegranate was treated as 'an accursed thing' in the worship of Demeter at Lycosura, Paus. VIII. 37. 7.

[2] Paus. II. 17. 4.

[3] See above, p. 548.

rite. Which supposition shall we prefer? There can be no real question. It is impossible to conceive of a people so cynical or so distempered as to darken the wedding-day with grim reminders of death. But to transfer some of the usages of marriage to the funeral-scene was to infuse one ray of hope where all else was sorrow and darkness, to teach that, though the dead and the mourners might grieve for their parting, yet by that parting from the old home the dead was to enter upon a new life, a life of wedded happiness, in the unseen world. For indeed if there were no such intention as this, what was the meaning of the λουτροφόρος set up over the grave of the unmarried, what the purpose of adorning the dead with wedding-garment and wedding-crown? These two acts at least are no accidents; they reveal a studied purpose of assimilating the usages of death to the usages of marriage; and if that purpose underlay two of the customs enumerated, there is good warrant for the belief that in all the coincidences between marriage-rites and funeral-rites the same thought was operating—that very thought which has been found to be the common property of the Greek race, from one of the masters of ancient tragedy down to the humblest peasant of our day. Custom past and present, ancient literature, modern folk-song, all agree in their presentment of death as a marriage into the house of Hades.

On this popular and withal recondite conception of death were founded, I believe, the highest religious aspirations of the ancient Greeks. Such as had served their gods piously and purely in this life might hope to win a closer union, as of wedlock, with those gods in the life hereafter. To them there could be neither blasphemy nor presumption in their hope; for to pious believers the fabled experience of their own ancestors in this life was a warrant for aspiring themselves to the same bliss at least hereafter; what had been, might be again. Nay, more; not only was the belief that the highest bliss of the hereafter consisted in the marriage of men with their gods free from all reproach of impiety, but it was the logical development of two religious sentiments which we have already reviewed—the desire for close communion between gods and men, and the belief that men after death and dissolution would still enjoy, like their gods, corporeal existence. A previous chapter has been devoted to a detailed examination of the means

whereby men in their daily life sought to maintain communication with the powers above them—oracles from which all might enquire and win inspired response; interpretation of the flight and cries of birds that were the messengers of heaven; reading of the signs written by the finger of some god on the flesh of the victim presented to him; divination from sight and sound and dream; sacrifice whereby some message of prayer might be sent with speed and safety to the god who had power to fulfil it. And in general it will, I think, be admitted that the main tendency of Greek religious thought was to draw gods and men nearer together, alike by an anthropomorphic conception of the gods and by an apotheosis of human beauty; that it was to subserve this end that Art became the handmaid of Religion, and strove to express the divine in terms of the human, to discover in man the potentialities of godhead. All religious hope and ambition and effort turned upon communion with the gods. How then in the next world should hope be fulfilled, ambition satisfied, effort rewarded? What should be the glorious consummation? Marriage was the closest communion between mortals in this world; marriage, so sang the poets, bound gods together in closest communion. Men's aspirations for communion with their gods could find no final satisfaction save in marriage. To the few, we may suppose—men of refined and reflective mind, capable of imagining spiritual joys—this marriage of men and gods was but a mystic, figurative expression for the union of man's soul with the soul of God, a thought as chastened and innocent of all sensuous connotation as the thought of many a woman who in a later era, withdrawn from the world, has comforted her loneliness with the hope of being the bride of Christ. But the many, I suspect, flinched not before a bold and literal interpretation of the thought, and, believing that, when death and physical dissolution were past, body as well as soul survived in another world, dared dream that having passed the gates of mortality into the demesne of the immortals they should be wedded, body and soul, in true wedlock with those deities who by veiled communion with them in this world had prepared them for sight and touch and full fruition hereafter.

But, it will be asked, where in all Greek literature can we find a statement, where even a hint, of this strange doctrine? No-

where a statement; often a hint; for these were things not to be divulged to the profane. To those alone who were initiated into the Mysteries was the doctrine revealed, and even to them, it may be, in parables only whose inner meaning each must probe for himself.

There have of course been those who have made light of the mysteries of the old Greek religion, and have seen in them nothing but the impositions of a close hierarchy playing upon the ignorance and credulity and fear of the common-folk. But when we consider the veneration in which the more famous mysteries were held for many centuries, when we remember that Eleusis was respected and left inviolate not only by the Lacedaemonians and other Greek peoples when they invaded Attic territory, but even by the Persians who had dared to devastate the Acropolis, and in later times by the yet ruder Celts, then it is easier to believe that we are dealing with a great religious institution based upon solid principles and vital doctrines which deserved a wide-spread and long-continued reverence from mankind, than that it was all the elaborate and empty hoax of a crafty priesthood.

Nor again does the view which makes Demeter simply a corn-goddess and the Eleusinian mysteries a portentous harvest-thanksgiving—and that apparently somewhat premature—require any long or serious consideration. Corn indeed was one of the blessings given by Demeter to this upper world of living men; perhaps in the very earliest ages of her worship this was the sum total of the boons which men sought of her; doubtless even in her fully-developed mysteries a part of men's thanks were still for the garnered harvest of the last year and for the promise which the green fields gave of her bounty once more to be renewed; for even in the nineteenth century of the Christian era her statue amid the ruins of Eleusis was still associated by the peasants with agriculture, and the removal of it, they apprehended, would cause a failure of the crops[1]. But in old time this was not all. To speak of Demeter as a mere personification of cereals is to advocate a partial truth little better than the cynical falsehood which makes her only the stalking-horse of designing priests.

[1] See above, p. 80.

For what said men of light and learning among the ancients[1], men who knew the whole truth and the whole spirit of her worship? 'Thrice happy they of men that have looked upon these rites ere they go to Hades' house; for they alone there have true life, the rest have nought there but ill[2].' So Sophocles, in language clearly recalling that of the so-called Homeric hymn[3] to Demeter; and in harmony with him Pindar: 'Happy he that hath seen those rites ere he go beneath the earth; he knoweth life's consummation, he knoweth its god-given source[4].' And surely such consummation of life should be in that paradise, where 'mid meadows red with roses lieth the space before the city's gates, all hazy with frankincense and laden with golden fruits,' where 'the glorious sun sheds his light while night is here[5]'; for to this belief even Aristophanes subscribes, neither daring nor wishing to make mock of the blessed ones who in the other world have part in the god-beloved festival, and wend their way with song and dance through the holy circle of the goddess, a lawn bright with flowers, meadows where roses richly blossom—on whom alone in their night-long worship the sun yet shines and a gracious light, for that they have learnt the mysteries and dealt righteously with all men[6].

Here then are the three great masters of lyric poetry, of tragedy, and of comedy in substantial agreement; and the hopes which they hold out are not the mere exuberance of poetic fancy, for sober prose affirms the same beliefs. What says Isocrates? 'Demeter... being graciously minded towards our forefathers because of their services to her, services of which none but the initiated may hear, gave us the greatest of all gifts, first, those fruits of the earth which saved us from living the life of beasts, and secondly, that rite which makes happier the hopes of those that participate therein concerning both the end of life and their whole existence; and our city proved herself not only god-beloved but also loving toward mankind, in that, having become mistress of such blessings, she grudged them not to the rest of the

[1] The following references are in the main taken from Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*.
[2] Soph. *Fragm.* 719 (Dind.).
[3] Hom. *Hymn. ad Cer.* 480 ff.
[4] Pind. *Fragm.* 137 (Bergk).
[5] Id. *Fragm.* 129. See above, p. 518.
[6] Aristoph. *Ranae* 440—459.

world, but gave to all men a share in that she had received[1].' Of this passage Lobeck[2] was disposed to make light, and that for the reason that Isocrates in another passage[3], with less orthodoxy perhaps and more charity, in speaking of the pious and upright in general, employs part of the same phrase which in the passage before us he applies to the initiated only. All good men, he says, have happier hopes 'concerning their whole existence'; virtue, that is, may expect a reward, vice a punishment, either here or hereafter. Are these fair grounds on which to condemn his reference to the mysteries as a meaningless common-place? If any comment is to be made upon this repetition of a well-known phrase, would it not be fairer to note that in reference to the mysteries he speaks of men's happier hopes not only generally—'concerning their whole existence' (περὶ τοῦ σύμπαντος αἰῶνος) but also specifically—'concerning the end of life' (περὶ τῆς τοῦ βίου τελευτῆς), and thus echoes the words of Pindar above quoted, 'he knoweth the consummation of life' (οἶδεν μὲν βιότου τελευτάν)? Nor is there any dearth of other authorities to prove that it was after death that the hopes of the initiated should 'be emptied in delight.' Let us hear Aristides. 'Nay, but the benefit of the (Eleusinian) festival is not merely the cheerfulness of the moment and the freedom and respite from all previous troubles, but also the possession of happier hopes concerning the end, hopes that our life hereafter will be the better, and that we shall not lie in darkness and in filth—the fate that is believed to await the uninitiated[4].' Such seem to have been the general terms in which the benefits of the mysteries might be recommended to the profane. The same ideas, almost the same phrases, occur again and again. Witness the well-known story of Diogenes the Cynic, who, when urged by a young man to get himself initiated, answered, 'It is strange, my young friend, if you fancy that by virtue of this rite the publicans will share with the gods the good things of Hades' house, while Agesilaus and Epaminondas lie in filth[5].' Or again let us read the advice of Crinagoras to his friend: 'Set thy foot on Cecropian soil, that thou may'st behold those nights of Demeter's great mysteries, which shall free thee

[1] Isocr. *Paneg.* p. 46.
[2] *Aglaoph.* I. p. 70.
[3] περὶ εἰρήνης, p. 166.
[4] Aristid. *Eleusin.* 259 (454).
[5] Julian. *Or.* VII. 238. The same story in similar words recurs in Diog. Laert. VI. 39 and Plut. *de Aud. Poet.* II. p. 21 F.

from care among the living, and, when thou goest where most are gone, shall make thy heart lighter[1].' And with equal seriousness Cicero, who in his ideal state would forbid all nocturnal rites as tending towards excesses, would except the Eleusinian mysteries, not only because of their humanising and cheering influence upon men's life in this world but also because they furnish better hopes in death[2].

Such are the most important passages bearing upon the religious as opposed to the temporal and agricultural aspects of Demeter's worship, such the general terms in which the blessings flowing therefrom were overtly described by men who knew the details of the covert doctrine. The information contained in them amounts to this: the initiated received in the mysteries a hope, a pledge, perhaps a foretaste, of the future bliss reserved for them only; the profane should lie in filth and outer darkness; the blessed should dwell in pleasant meadows, and the sun should shine bright upon them; they should be god-beloved, and should share with the gods the good things of the next world.

Now obviously these vague and general promises are conceived in the tone and the spirit of that popular religion which had sprung from the very heart of the Hellenic folk. The pleasant meadows where the initiated should dwell are none other than that place which appears once as the asphodel mead, anon as the islands of the blessed or as part of the under-world, and is now named Paradise. The light which illumines even the night-time of the blessed is the necessary contrast to the murky gloom of a nether abode, conceived almost in the spirit of Homer, where the profane must lie as in a slough. And finally the close communion of the blessed with gods who love them is the consummation of those hopes which the whole Hellenic people entertained, and of those efforts which the whole Hellenic people put forth, to attain to close intercourse in this life with the gods whom they worshipped. Clearly then the general promises, whose inner mysteries were revealed only to the initiated, were based upon the old ideals, the innate beliefs, the traditional hopes, in a word, the natural and spontaneous religion of the Hellenic race.

[1] Crinagoras, *Ep.* xxx.

[2] Cic. *de Leg.* II. § 36.

And, as at Eleusis, so probably in other mysteries. In a famous passage Theo Smyrnaeus[1] compares the successive steps to be taken in the study of philosophy with the several stages of initiation in mysteries, and Lobeck[2] in his examination of the passage has shown that the reference is not to the mysteries of Eleusis, or at any rate not to them only. It is probable enough that Theo was speaking of mysteries in general, both public and private, in most of which there were, doubtless, several grades of initiation, and he may even have selected the details of his illustration (for it is an analogy only, not an argument, in which he is engaged) from different rites. Yet for his fifth and final stage of initiation, beyond even 'open vision' (*ἐποπτεία*) and 'exposition' (*δᾳδουχία* or *ἱεροφαντία*), he names that bliss which is the outcome of the earlier stages, the bliss of being god-beloved and sharing the life of gods (*ἡ κατὰ τὸ θεοφιλὲς καὶ θεοῖς συνδιαιτὸν εὐδαιμονία*).

The recurrence of the word *θεοφιλής* in the above passages, whether in reference to the Eleusinian or to other mysteries, cannot but excite attention; and we shall not I think go far astray if we take the last phrase of Theo Smyrnaeus, 'the bliss of being god-beloved and sharing the life of gods,' as an epitome of the somewhat vague and general promises held out to the profane as an inducement to initiation. This was the fulfilment of those 'happier hopes'—to use another recurrent phrase—of which the initiated might only speak in guarded fashion. The exact interpretation of this phrase, as we shall have reason to believe when we consider the separate rites in detail, was the great mystic secret. But of that more anon; for the present let us suppose that the general assurances openly given concerning both the Eleusinian and other mysteries are fairly summed up in the promise 'of being god-beloved and of sharing the life of gods.' Such a promise appealed to those innate hopes of the whole Greek race which manifested themselves in their constant striving after close intercourse and communion with their gods; in other words, the happier hopes concerning the hereafter, which the mysteries sought to appropriate and to reserve to the initiated alone, had for their basis the natural religion of the Hellenic folk.

[1] *Mathem.* I. p. 18, ed. Buller.

[2] *Aglaoph.* I. pp. 39 f.

To admit this is necessarily to admit the validity of Lobeck's refutation of those critics who have sought to father on the mysteries, usually on those of Eleusis, doctrines and ideas foreign to, or even incompatible with, popular Greek religion—pantheism, the emanation of the human soul from the soul of God, the transmigration of souls, the Platonic theory of ideas, the unity of God omnipotent and omniscient[1], and such-like religious products of different ages and different climes. For if we were to accept the view that the teaching of the mysteries was a thing apart from the ordinary trend and tenor of the popular religion, then we should be compelled to regard those general promises of future bliss (which were in truth, as we have just seen, based upon popular religion) as a fraudulent bait designed to entice men away from their old beliefs and to ensnare them in dogma and priestcraft; and if any would impute fraud, there awaits them the task of convicting Pindar, Sophocles, Aristophanes, Isocrates, and others who wrote of that which they knew, of conspiracy to deceive.

But while the promises held forth by the Eleusinian and other mysteries, and therefore also the doctrines which elucidated those vague promises, were a product of the popular religion, those doctrines themselves were not a matter of popular knowledge. The very fact of initiation, the death-penalty inflicted upon the profane who by any means penetrated to the scene of the mysteries, the wild indignation excited in Athens by a charge of mocking the mystic rites, the scrupulous privacy observed in investigating that charge before a court composed of the initiated only—all these are proofs that Eleusis was the school of secret beliefs and hopes held in deep veneration by those to whom the knowledge of them was vouchsafed. Secret doctrines existed; that which had sprung from the beliefs of the many had become the property of the few. How can this be explained?

The explanation is not difficult. The worship of Demeter and possibly many other rites which were afterwards called 'mysteries' were the most holy part of the religion of the Pelasgians; and when the Achaeans, a people of strange tongue and strange religion, came among them, the Pelasgians would not admit them to a knowledge of their rites but thenceforth performed those rites in secrecy. This is proved by two facts. First, the rites which at Eleusis, in

[1] See Lobeck, *Aglaoph.* I. pp. 6 ff.

Samothrace, and among the Cicones in Thrace, the country of Orpheus, were imparted as mysteries to the initiated only, were in Crete open to all and there was no obligation to secrecy concerning them[1]. Secondly, at Eleusis at any rate the purity required of candidates for initiation was not only physical and spiritual, as secured by ablution and abstinence, but also linguistic; it was necessary *καθαρεύειν τῇ φωνῇ*[2], to speak the Greek language purely. These two facts taken together solve the difficulty. Before the coming of the Achaeans the whole Pelasgian population whether of the Greek mainland or of such an island as Crete celebrated the rites of Demeter openly. In Crete, where no Achaeans penetrated, the old custom naturally continued unchanged. On the mainland the influx of a people of strange tongue and strange religion necessitated secrecy in the native rites, lest the presence of men who knew not Demeter should profane her worship; the right of entry therefore at her festivals was decided by the simplest test of Achaean or Pelasgian nationality, the test of speech; and in later times, when the Achaeans had acquired the Pelasgian speech[3], the customs thus established were not abolished; the rites of Demeter remained 'mysteries' to be conducted in secret, and the Shibboleth was still exacted.

Since then we may not seek in the teachings of the mysteries anything alien from the spirit of the popular religion, the scope of our enquiry is more limited and its course more clear. The secret to be discovered is something which had been evolved from the popular religion, some intensification and higher development of those hopes and beliefs, yearnings and strivings, which have continuously marked the religious life of the Greek folk. Now the mass of the Greek people have always hoped and believed, as their care for the dead has constantly shown, that beyond death and dissolution lay a life in which body and soul should be reunited and restored to their old activity; the mysteries might well confirm the initiated in that expectation and picture to them the happy habitations where they should dwell. Again the mass of

[1] Diodorus, v. 77. Cf. Miss Harrison, *Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 567.

[2] For references on this point, see Lobeck, *Aglaophamus*, I. 14 ff.

[3] For the evidence that the Achaeans adopted the language of the Pelasgians, and not *vice versâ*, see Ridgeway, *Early Age of Greece*, vol. I. p. 631 ff.

the Greek people have always yearned and striven by manifold means in this life for close communion with their gods; the mysteries might well be a sacrament which afforded to the initiated both a means and a pledge of enjoying in the next world, to which body as well as soul should pass, the closest of all communion with their gods, the union of wedlock.

Let it then be supposed that the two main ideas of the mysteries, whether expounded in speech or represented in ritual, were these—bodily survival after death, and marriage of men with gods; what would have been the natural attitude of Christians towards these doctrines? For it is in the light of the charges brought by early Christian writers against the mysteries that such a supposition must first be examined. The doctrine of the immortality of the body as well as of the soul was evidently little exposed to Christian attacks; and it may have been because the Christian doctrine of the resurrection had much in common with the old Greek doctrine, that St Paul found among his audience on the Areopagus some who did not mock, but said 'We will hear thee again of this matter.' But with the further doctrine of marriage between men and gods Christianity could have no sympathy, but would inevitably regard it as offensive both in theology and in morality, as implying the existence of a plurality of gods, and as savouring of that sensuality, which above all other sin the apostle to the Gentiles set himself to combat.

And it is in fact upon these two points that the mass of the accusations brought by early Christian writers against Greek paganism hinge and hang. These were the points at which Greek religion seemed to its assailants most readily vulnerable, and against which they sought to use as weapons the very language of paganism itself. Just as Clement of Alexandria[1] seeks to prove out of the mouth of Homer, who speaks of the gods in general as δαίμονες[2], that the Greek gods are confessedly mere *demons* (for the word δαίμων had seemingly deteriorated in meaning), that is to say, abominable and unclean spirits, enemies of the one true God, so too the words ἄρρητος and ἀπόρρητος, used by the pagans of their 'unspeakable' mysteries, were misinterpreted by the Christians with one consent and became a handle for convicting the old religion of 'unnameable' impurities.

[1] *Protrept.* § 55.

[2] Hom. *Il.* I. 221 f.

With the question of polytheism however we are not further concerned; whether the Hellenic gods were true gods, as their worshippers held, or devils, as Clement thought, or non-existent, as many will think to-day, matters not; all that we need to know in this respect is known, namely, that the mysteries, like the popular religion, acknowledged a plurality of gods; for in the Eleusinian drama alone several gods played a part. It is rather the frequent and violent charges of impurity which call for investigation.

A few examples will suffice for the present. A comprehensive denunciation is that of Eusebius, who charges the pagans with celebrating, 'in chant and hymn and story and in the unnameable rites of the mysteries, adulteries and yet baser lusts, and incestuous unions of mother with son, brother with sister[1].' And again he says, 'In every city rites and mysteries of gods are taught, in harmony with the mythical stories of old time, so that even now in these rites, as well as in hymns and odes to the gods, men can hear of marriages of the gods, and of their procreation of children, and of dirges for death, and of drunken excesses, and of wanderings, and of passionate love or anger[2].' Equally outspoken is Clement of Alexandria in his 'Exhortation to the heathen.' Some specific statements in that work concerning the mysteries of several gods, though they support the general charges of impurity, may be postponed for later examination. It will be enough here to adduce the phrases in which, after denouncing those who, whether in the mysteries of the temples or the paintings with which their own houses were adorned, loved to look upon the lusts of gods (he risks even the word *πασχητιασμοί*), and 'regarded incontinence as piety,' Clement reaches the climax of his invective:—'Such are your models of voluptuousness, such your creeds of lust, such the doctrines of gods who commit fornication with you; for, as the Athenian orator says, what a man wishes, that he also believes[3].' This brutal directness of Clement is however hardly more effective than the elegant innuendo of Synesius in dealing with the same subject. Commenting on the secrecy of the nocturnal rites, he describes them as celebrated at 'times and places competent to conceal *ἀρρητουργίαν ἔνθεον*[4]'—

[1] Euseb. *Demonstr. Evang.* v. 1, 268 E.
[2] *Praep. Evang.* xv. 1, 788 C.
[3] *Προτρεπτ.* § 61.
[4] Synes. *de Prov.* II. 124 B.

a phrase which I despair of rendering, for the 'unspeakable acts' to which 'divine frenzy' led, are those which are either too holy or too infamous to be named.

These few typical passages amply demonstrate that alike by insinuation and by open accusation the Christian writers conspired to brand the mysteries with the infamy of deeds unnameable. What is the explanation of this organised campaign of calumny?

Some have supposed that the Christian writers in general confused the public and the private mysteries, and that, aware of the license which characterized the latter, they included all in one condemnation. But this explanation appears at any rate inadequate. We have seen how Cicero distinguished sharply between the Eleusinian mysteries, in which he had participated and for which he felt reverence, and other nocturnal rites which gave shelter to all manner of excess. It is difficult therefore to suppose that in later times the Christian writers should all have fallen unwittingly into the error of confusing all mysteries together; and no less difficult to imagine that, if they recognised how far removed were the most respected of the public mysteries from the baser private orgies, they should have deliberately exposed themselves to the charge of ignorance of the subject concerning which they presumed to preach. Clement of Alexandria was too shrewd a disputant so to stultify himself.

Nor again is it a sufficient explanation to say that the strain and excitement of such mysteries as those of Eleusis were responsible for a certain amount of subsequent indiscretion. Let it be granted that many of those who had witnessed the solemn rites were guilty afterwards of drunkenness and licentiousness[1]; yet these would be no grounds for convicting the mysteries themselves of impurity; to so perverted a charge the heathen might well have answered that rioting and drunkenness had not been unknown at the Christians' most solemn service; and indeed the same argument could up to this day be used against the Greek celebration of Easter. No; the charges of impurity were brought against the mysteries themselves, not against the incidental misdoings of some who had witnessed them. It must have been either the doctrines taught or the dramatic representations by

[1] Cf. Artemid. *Oneirocr.* Bk III. cap. 61.

means of which they were taught that furnished the Christian writers with a handle for accusation.

Now if, as I have supposed, the doctrine of the marriage of men with their gods was the cardinal doctrine of the mysteries (for the other doctrine of bodily survival is merely preliminary and subordinate to this), and if some dramatic representation was given as a means of instilling into men's minds the hope of attaining to that summit of bliss, it is not difficult to see what an opening the mysteries gave to their opponents for the charges which were actually brought. The ultimate bliss promised to the initiated was in general terms said to consist in 'being god-beloved and dwelling with the gods,' and this phrase, we are supposing, signified to the initiated themselves an assurance that their gods would admit them even to wedlock with them in the future life. It required then no great ingenuity in the way of misrepresentation for Clement, if he had but an inkling of the secret doctrine, to denounce the heathen and their beliefs in that opprobrious phrase, 'Such are the doctrines of gods that commit fornication with you.' This champion of Christianity knew no chivalry, gave no quarter, disdained no weapon, held no method of attack too base or insidious, if only he could wound and crush his heathen foes. It was his part to pervert, to degrade, to blaspheme their whole religion; and that which they held most sacred was marked out for his most virulent scorn. Naturally to those who drew near with pure and reverent minds the mysteries wore a very different aspect. That which Clement misnamed lust, they felt to be love; where he saw only degradation, they recognised a wonderful condescension of their gods. For in the words of that religion which Clement preached 'to the pure all things are pure'; and it was purification which the initiated sought by abstinence and ablution during the first part of the Eleusinian festival before they were admitted to their holy of holies.

Indeed if we would understand at all the spirit in which the ancient Greeks approached the celebration of the mysteries, we should do well to turn our attention for a little to the modern Greek celebration of Holy Week and Easter; for this is, so to speak, the Christian counterpart of the old mysteries, and seems to owe much to them. It so happens that Easter falls in the same period of the year as did the great Eleusinian festival—the period

when the re-awakening of the earth from its winter sleep suggests to man his own re-awakening from the sleep of death; and it is probable that the Church turned this coincidence in time to good account by making her own festival a substitute for the festival of Demeter or other kindred rites, and even by modelling her own services after the pagan pattern; for it would seem that the Church, when once her early struggles had secured her a firm position, exchanged hostility for conciliation, and sought to absorb rather than to oust paganism. Her complaisance is clearly seen in the ceremonies of Good Friday and Easter; for, with all her severe repression of the use of idols (whose place however is well supplied by the pictures which are called icons), she has permitted the use of a sculptured figure at this one festival, and even down to this day Christ is represented in some localities[1] in effigy; and it can hardly be doubted that the purpose of this concession was to make the Christian festival as dramatic and attractive as the pagan mysteries celebrated at the same season. Again the absorption of pagan ideas is well illustrated by the belief still prevalent among the peasants that the Easter festival, like the cult of Demeter, has an important bearing upon the growth of the crops. A story in point was told to me by one who had travelled in Greece[2]. Happening to be in some village of Eubœa during Holy Week, he had been struck by the emotion which the Good Friday services evoked; and observing on the next day the same general air of gloom and despondency, he questioned an old woman about it; whereupon she replied, 'Of course I am anxious; for if Christ does not rise to-morrow, we shall have no corn this year.'

In other details too there is a close correspondence between the pagan and the Christian festivals. As a period of abstinence was required of the *mystae*, so during Lent and still more strictly during Holy Week the Greek peasants keep a fast which certainly predisposes them to hysterical emotion during the services; and *en revanche*, just as the initiated are said to have indulged themselves too freely when the mysteries were over, so the modern peasants, when the announcement of the Resurrection has been made, disperse in haste to feast upon their Easter lamb,

[1] In Thera, as I myself witnessed, and until recently at Delphi. Greeks with whom I have spoken of this custom have often seen or heard of it somewhere.

[2] I regret that my notes contain no mention of my informant's name. I must apologise to him for the omission.

and while it is still a-cooking experience the inevitable effects of plentiful wine on an empty stomach. Again, just as the rites of Eleusis were nocturnal, so the chief services of Holy Week are those of the Friday night and the Saturday night; and it may be that the torch-light processions which close the services on those two nights are related to the δᾳδουχία of Eleusis. But these are minor details; it is in the actual services of Good Friday and Easter that the most striking resemblance to the Eleusinian mysteries is found, and the spirit in which the worshippers approach may still be the same now as then. Let me briefly describe the festival as I saw it in the island of Santorini, or, to give it the old name which has revived in modern times, Thera.

The Lenten fast was drawing to a close when I arrived. For the first week it is strictly observed, meat, fish, eggs, milk, cheese, and even olive-oil being prohibited, so that the ordinary diet is reduced to bread and water, to which is sometimes added a nauseous soup made from dried cuttle-fish or octopus; for these along with shell-fish are not reckoned to be animal food, as being bloodless. During the next four weeks some relaxation is allowed; but no one with any pretensions to piety would even then partake of fish, meat, or eggs; the last-mentioned are stored up until Easter and then, being dyed red, are either eaten or—more wisely—offered to visitors. Then comes 'the Great Week' (ἡ μεγάλη ἑβδομάδα), and with it the same strict regulations come into force as during the first week of Lent. It was not hard to perceive that for most of the villagers the fast had been a real and painful abstinence. Work had almost ceased; for there was little energy left. Leisure was not enjoyed; for there was little spirit even for chatting. Everywhere white, sharp-featured faces told of real hunger; and the silence was most often broken by an outburst of irritability. In a few days time I could understand it; for I too perforce fasted; and I must own that a daily diet of dry bread for *déjeuner* and of dry bread and octopus soup for dinner soon changed my outlook upon life. Little wonder then if these folk after six weeks of such treatment were nervous and excitable.

Such was the condition of body and mind in which they attended the long service of Good Friday night. Service I have said, but drama were a more fitting word, a funeral-drama. At the top of the nave, just below the chancel-step, stood a bier and

upon it lay the figure of the Christ, all too death-like in the dim light. The congregation gaze upon him, reverently hushed, while the priests' voices rise in prayer and chant as it were in lamentation for the dead God lying there in state. Hour after hour passes. The women have kissed the dead form, and are gone. The moment has come for carrying the Christ out to burial. The procession moves forward—in front, the priests with candles and torches and, guarded by them, the open bier borne shoulder-high —behind, a reverent, bare-headed crowd. The night is dark and gusty. It rains, and the rugged, tortuous alleys of the town are slippery. It is late, but none are sleeping. Unheeding of wind and rain, the women kneel at open door or window, praying, swinging censers, sprinkling perfume on the passing bier. Slowly, haltingly, led by the dirge of priests, now in darkness, now lighted by the torches' flare and intermittent beams from cottage doorways, groping at corners, stumbling in ill-paved by-ways, the mourners follow their God to his grave. The circuit of the town is done. All have taken their last look upon the dead. The sepulchre is reached—a vault beneath the church from which the funeral started. The priests alone enter with the bier. There is a pause. The crowd waits. The silence is deep as the darkness, only broken here and there by a deep-drawn sigh. Is it the last depth of anguish, or is it well-nigh relief that the long strain is over? The priests return. In silence the crowd have waited, in silence they disperse. It is finished.

But there is a sequel on the morrow. Soon after dark on Easter-eve the same weary yet excited faces may be seen gathered in the church. But there is a change too; there is a feeling abroad of anxiety, of expectancy. Hours must yet pass ere midnight, and not till then is there hope of the announcement, 'Christ is risen!' The suspense seems long. To-night there is restlessness rather than silence. Some go to and fro between the church and their homes; others join discordantly in the chants and misplace the responses; anything to cheat the long hours of waiting. Midnight draws near; from hand to hand are passed the tapers and candles which shall light the joyful procession, if only the longed-for announcement be made. What is happening there now behind those curtains which veil the chancel from the expectant throng? Midnight strikes. The curtains are drawn

back. Yes, there is the bier, borne but yesternight to the grave. It is empty. That is only the shroud upon it. The words of the priest ring out true, 'Christ is risen!' And there behind the chancel, see, a second veil is drawn back. There in the sanctuary, on the altar-steps, bright with a blaze of light stands erect the figure of the Christ who, so short and yet so long a while ago, was borne lifeless to the tomb. A miracle, a miracle! Quickly from the priest's lighted candle the flame is passed. In a moment the dim building is illumined by a lighted taper in every hand. A procession forms, a joyful procession now. Everywhere are light and glad voices and the embraces of friends, crying aloud the news 'Christ is risen' and answering 'He is risen indeed.' In every home the lamb is prepared with haste, the wine flows freely; in the streets is the flash of torches, the din of fire-arms, and all the exuberance of simple joy. The fast is over; the dead has been restored to life before men's eyes; well may they rejoice even to ecstasy. For have they not felt the ecstasy of sorrow? This was no tableau on which they looked, no drama in which they played a part. It was all true, all real. The figure on the bier was indeed the dead Christ; the figure on the altar-steps was indeed the risen Christ. In these simple folk religion has transcended reason; they have reached the heights of spiritual exaltation; they have seen and felt as minds more calm and rational can never see nor feel.

And the ancient Greeks, had not they too the gift of ecstasy, the faculty to soar above facts on the wings of imagination? When the drama of Demeter and Kore was played before the eyes of the initiated at Eleusis, were not they too uplifted in mind until amid the magic of night they were no longer spectators of a drama but themselves had a share in Demeter's sorrow and wandering and joy? For the pagan story is not unlike the Christian story in its power to move both tears and gladness. As now men mourn beside the bier of Christ, so in old time may men have shared Demeter's mourning for her child who though divine had suffered the lot of men and passed away to the House of Hades. As now men rejoice when they behold the risen Christ, so in old time may men have shared Demeter's joy when her child returned from beneath the earth, proving that there is life beyond the grave. But the old story taught more than this. Not only did Kore live

in the lower world, but her passing thither was not death but wedding. Therefore just as now the resurrection of Christ, who though divine is the representative of mankind, is held to be an earnest of man's resurrection, so the wedded life of Kore in the nether world may have been to the initiated an assurance of the same bliss to be vouchsafed to them hereafter.

What was there then in this drama of Demeter and Kore at which the Christian writers could take offence or cavil? We do not of course know in what detail the story was represented; but the pivot on which the whole plot turned was necessarily the rape of Kore. Now it appears that in the play the part of Aïdoneus was taken by an hierophant and the part of Kore by a priestess; and it was the alleged indecency resulting therefrom which the fathers of the Church most severely censured. Asterius, after defending the Christians from the charge of worshipping saints as if they had been not human but divine, seeks to turn the tables on his pagan opponents by accusing them of deifying Demeter and Kore, whom he evidently regards as having once been human figures in mythology. Then he continues, 'Is not Eleusis the scene of the descent into darkness, and of the solemn acts of intercourse between the hierophant and the priestess, alone together? Are not the torches extinguished, and does not the large, the numberless assembly of common people believe that their salvation lies in that which is being done by the two in the darkness[1]?' Again it was objected against the Valentinians by Tertullian that they copied 'the whoredoms of Eleusis[2],' and from another authority we learn that part of the ceremonies of these heretics consisted in 'preparing a nuptial chamber' and celebrating 'a spiritual marriage[3].' These two statements, read in conjunction, form a strong corroboration of the information given by Asterius; and we are bound to conclude that the scene of the rape of Kore was represented at Eleusis by the descent of the priest and priestess who played the chief parts into a dark nuptial chamber.

Now it is easy enough to suppose, as Sainte-Croix suggests[4], that public morals were safeguarded by assigning the chief *rôles* in

[1] Asterius, *Encom. in SS. Martyr.* in Migne, *Patrolog. Graeco-Lat.* vol. XL. p. 324.

[2] *Adv. Valentin.* cap. I.

[3] Eusebius, *Hist. Eccles.* IV. 11. Cf. Sainte-Croix, *Recherches sur les Mystères*, 2nd ed., I. p. 366.

[4] *loc. cit.*

the drama to persons of advanced age, or, as one ancient author states[1], by temporarily and partially paralysing the hierophant with a small dose of hemlock. Whether each of the initiated was at any time conducted through the same ritual is uncertain. In the formulary of the Eleusinian rites, as recorded by Clement of Alexandria—'I fasted; I drank the sacred potion (*κυκεῶνα*); I took out of the chest; having wrought (*ἐργασάμενος*) I put back into the basket and from the basket into the chest[2]'—the expression 'having wrought' has been taken to be an euphemism denoting the same mystic union as between hierophant and priestess[3]. If this view is correct, it would imply no doubt that full initiation required the candidate to go through the whole ritual in person; in this case it must be presumed that some precaution such as the dose of hemlock was taken in the interests of morality.

But the mere fact that a scene of rape should form any part of a religious rite, was to the Christians a stumbling-block. This was their insurmountable objection to the mysteries, and they were only too prone to exaggerate a ceremony, which with reverent and delicate treatment need have been in no way morally deleterious, into a sensual and noxious orgy. The story, how Demeter's beautiful and innocent daughter was suddenly carried off from the meadow where she was gathering flowers into the depths of the dark under-world, spoke to them only of the violence and lust of her ravisher Aïdoneus. But the legend might bear another complexion. Kore, as representative of mankind or at least of the initiated among mankind, suffers what seems the most cruel lot, a sudden departure from this life in the midst of youth and beauty and spring-time; and Demeter searches for her awhile in vain, and mourns for her as men mourn their dead. Yet afterward it is found that there is no cruelty in Kore's lot, for she is the honoured bride of the king of that world to which she was borne away; and Demeter is comforted, for her child is not dead nor lost to her, but is allowed to return in living form to visit her. What then must have been the 'happier hopes' held out to

[1] [Origen] *Philosophumena*, p. 115 (ed. Miller), p. 170 (ed. Cruice). Cf. Miss J. Harrison, *Proleg. to Study of Gk Relig.* p. 549.

[2] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* II. 18.

[3] Dieterich, *Eine Mithras-Liturgie*, p. 125, cited by Miss J. Harrison, *Proleg. to Study of Gk Relig.* p. 155, note 3.

those who had looked on the great drama of Eleusis? What was meant by that prospect of being 'god-beloved and sharing the life of gods'? How came it that the assembly of the initiated believed their salvation to lie in the union of Hades and Persephone, represented in the persons of hierophant and priestess, in the subterranean nuptial-chamber? What was the bearing of the legend dramatically enacted upon these hopes and prospects and beliefs? Surely it taught that not only was there physical life beyond death, but a life of wedded happiness with the gods.

And the same doctrine seems to be the *motif* of many other popular legends and of mysteries founded thereon; its settings and its harmonies may be different, but the essential melody is the same. At Eleusis Demeter's daughter was the representative of mankind, for she went down to the house of Hades as is the lot of men. But Crete had another legend wherein Demeter was the representative deity with whom mankind might hope for union. Was it not told how Iasion even in this life found such favour in the goddess' eyes that she was 'wed with him in sweet love mid the fresh-turned furrows of the fat land of Crete[1]'? And happiness such as was granted to him here was laid up for all the initiated hereafter; else would there be no meaning in those lines, 'Blessed, methinks, is the lot of him that sleeps, and tosses not, nor turns, even Endymion; and, dearest maiden, blessed I call Iasion, whom such things befell, as ye that be profane shall never come to know[2].' Surely that which is withheld from the profane is by implication reserved to the sanctified, and to them it is promised that they shall know by their own experience hereafter the bliss which Iasion even here obtained. It was, I think, in this spirit and this belief that the Athenians in old time called their dead Δημητρεῖοι, 'Demeter's folk[3]'; for the popular belief in the condescension of the Mistress, great and reverend goddess though she was, was so firmly rooted, it would seem, that even to this day the folk-stories, as we have seen, still tell how the 'Mistress of the earth and of the sea,' she whom men still call Despoina and reverence for her love of righteousness and for her

[1] Hesiod, *Theog.* 970 f. Cf. Hom. *Od.* v. 125.
[2] Theocr. *Id.* III. 49 ff. (A. Lang's translation).
[3] Plutarch, *de fac. in orb. lun.* 28, cited by Miss Harrison, *Proleg. to Study of Gk Relig.* p. 267.

stern punishment of iniquity, has yet admitted brave heroes to her embrace in the mountain-cavern where, as of old in Arcady, she still dwells[1].

Nor did the cults of Demeter and Kore monopolise these hopes and beliefs. In the religious drama of Aphrodite and Adonis, in the Sabazian mysteries, in the holiest rites of Dionysus, in the wild worship of Cybele, the same thought seems ever to recur. It matters little whether these gods and their rites were foreign or Hellenic in origin. If they were not native, at least they were soon naturalised, and that for the simple reason that they satisfied the religious cravings of the Greek race. The essential spirit of their worship, whatever the accidents of form and expression, was the spirit of the old Pelasgian worship of Demeter; and therefore, though Dionysus may have been an immigrant from northern barbarous peoples, the Greeks did not hesitate to give him room and honour beside Demeter in the very sanctuary of Eleusis. Similar, we may well believe, was the lot of other foreign gods and rites. Whencesoever derived, they owed their reception in Greece to the fact that their character appealed to certain native religious instincts of the Greek folk. Once transplanted to Hellenic soil, they were soon completely Hellenized; those elements which were foreign or distasteful to Greek religion were quickly eradicated or of themselves faded into oblivion, while all that accorded with the Hellenic spirit throve into fuller perfection; for the character of a deity and of a cult depends ultimately upon the character of the worshippers.

It is fair therefore to treat of Aphrodite as of a genuinely Greek deity; for, though she may have entered Greece from Eastern lands, doubtless long before the Homeric age her worship no less than her personality was permeated with the spirit of genuinely Greek religion. Too well known to need re-telling here is the story of how—to use the words of Theocritus once more—'the beautiful Cytherea was brought by Adonis, as he pastured his flock upon the mountain-side, so far beyond the verge of frenzy, that not even in his death doth she put him from her bosom[2].' Such was the plot of one of the most famous religious dramas of old time. And what was its moral for those who

[1] See above, pp. 91 f. and 96 ff.

[2] Theocr. *Id.* III. 46 ff.

had ears to hear? Surely that the beloved of the gods may hope for wedlock with them in death.

It was certainly in this sense that Clement of Alexandria understood certain other mysteries of Aphrodite, though, needless to say, he puts upon them the most obscene construction. After relating in terms unnecessarily disgusting the legend of how by the very act of Uranus' self-mutilation the sea became pregnant and gave birth from among its foam to the goddess Aphrodite, he states that 'in the rites which celebrate this voluptuousness of the sea, as a token of the goddess' birth there are handed to those that are being initiated into the lore of adultery (*τοῖς μυουμένοις τὴν τέχνην τὴν μοιχικήν*) a lump of salt and a *phallus*; and they for their part present her with a coin, as if they were her lovers and she their mistress (*ὡς ἑταίρας ἐρασταί*)[1].' Thus Clement; but those who are willing to see in the mysteries of the Greek religion something more than organised sensuality will do well to reflect whether that which Clement calls 'being initiated into the lore of adultery' was not really an initiation into those hopes of marriage with the gods of which we have already found evidence in the popular religion, and whether the goddess' symbolic acceptance of her worshippers as lovers does not fit in exactly with that bold conception of man's future bliss. The symbolism indeed, if Clement's statement is accurate, was crude and even repellent, but its significance is clear; and those who approached these mysteries of Aphrodite in reverent mood need not have been repelled by that which modern taste would account indecent in the ritual. Greek feeling never erred on the side of prudery; men were familiar with the *Hermae* erected in the streets and with the symbolism of the *phallus* in religious ceremonies, and tolerated the publication of literature—be it the comedy of Aristophanes or Clement's own exhortation to the heathen—which neither as a source of amusement nor of instruction would be tolerated now.

The particular mysteries to which Clement alludes in this passage seem to have been concerned with the story of Aphrodite's birth, and though it is difficult to conjecture how that story can have been made to illustrate and to inculcate the doctrine of the

[1] *Protrept.* § 14.

marriage of men and gods, the information given by Clement with respect to the ritual makes it clear that such was their object. But in that other rite of the same goddess, that namely which celebrated the story of Adonis, the whole *motif* of the drama was the continuance of Aphrodite's love for him after his death, a love so strong that it prevailed upon the gods of the lower world to let him return for half of every year to the upper world and the arms of his mistress. Here, though expressed in different imagery, is the same doctrine as that which underlay the drama of Eleusis. Here again is an illustration, or rather, for those who were capable of religious ecstasy, a proof, of the doctrine that the dead yet lived, and in that life were both in body and in soul one with their gods. For 'thrice-beloved Adonis who even in Acheron is beloved[1]' was the type and forerunner of all those who had part in his mysteries.

In another version this legend of Adonis is brought into even closer relation with the Eleusinian mysteries by the introduction of Persephone[2]. To her is assigned the part of a rival to Aphrodite, and being equally enamoured of the beautiful Adonis she is glad of his death whereby he is torn from the arms of Aphrodite in the upper world, and enters the chamber of the nether world where her love in turn may have its will; but in the end Aphrodite descends to the house of Hades, and a compact is arranged between the two goddesses by which each in turn may possess Adonis for half the year. This version of the story is cruder, but its teaching is obviously the same—Adonis, the favourite of heaven in this life, and the precursor of all who by initiation in the mysteries win heaven's favour, survives in the lower world with both body and soul unimpaired by death, and is admitted to wedlock with the great goddess of the dead.

The same doctrine again seems to have been the basis of certain mystic rites associated with Dionysus. From the speech against Neaera attributed to Demosthenes we learn that at Athens there was annually celebrated a marriage between the wife of the chief magistrate (ἄρχων βασιλεύς) and Dionysus. The solemnity was reckoned among things 'unspeakable'; foreigners were not per-

[1] Theocr. *Id.* xv. 86.

[2] *Orph. Hymn.* LVI.; Bion, *Id.* I. 5. 54; Lucian, *Dial. deor.* XI. 1; Macrob. *Saturn.* I. 21; Procop. *in Esai.* XVIII. p. 258. Cf. Lenormant, *Monogr. de la voie sacrée éleusin.*, where many other references are given.

mitted to see or to hear anything of it; and even Athenian citizens, it seems, might not enter the innermost sanctuary in which the union of Dionysus with the 'queen' (*βασίλιννα*) was celebrated[1]. There were however present and assisting in some way fourteen priestesses (*γεραραί*), dedicated to the service of the god and bound by special vows of chastity. These priestesses, we are told, corresponded in number to the altars of Dionysus[2], and they were appointed by the archon whose wife was wed with Dionysus[3]. There our actual knowledge of the facts ends; but there is material enough on which to base a rational surmise. The correspondence between the number of priestesses bound by vows of purity and the number of the altars suggests that in this custom is to be sought a relic of human sacrifice. The selection of the priestesses by the magistrate who held the title of 'king' suggests that in bygone times it had been the duty of the king, as being also chief priest, to select fourteen virgins who should be sacrificed on Dionysus' altars and thereby sent to him as wives. Subsequently maybe, as humanity gradually mitigated the wilder rites of religion, the number of victims was reduced to one; and later still the human sacrifice was altogether abolished, and, instead of sending to Dionysus his wife by the road of death, the still pious but now more humane worshippers of the god contented themselves with a symbolic marriage between him and the wife of their chief magistrate.

The conception of human sacrifice as a means of sending a messenger from this world to some power above, which receives clear expression in that modern story from Santorini which I have narrated in an earlier chapter[4], was, I have there argued, known also to the ancient Greeks; and the same means of communication may equally well have been employed for the despatch of a human wife to some god. Plutarch appears to have been actually familiar with this idea. In a passage in which he is attempting to vindicate the purity and goodness of the gods and, it must be added withal, their aloofness from human affairs, he claims that all the religious rites and means of communion are concerned, not with the great gods (*θεοί*), but with lesser deities (*δαίμονες*)

[1] Dem. *Κατὰ Νεαίρας*, pp. 1369—1371 *et passim*. Cf. Arist. *Ἀθην. Πολ.* 3.
[2] *Etymol. Mag.* 227. 36.
[3] Hesych. s.v. *γεραραί*.
[4] See above, pp. 339 ff.

who are of varying character, some good, others evil, and that the rites also vary accordingly. "As regards the mysteries," he says, "wherein are given the greatest manifestations or representations (ἐμφάσεις καὶ διαφάσεις) of the truth concerning 'daemons,' let my lips be reverently sealed, as Herodotus has it"; but the wilder orgies of religion, he argues, are to be set down as a means of appeasing evil 'daemons' and of averting their wrath; the human sacrifices of old time, for example, were not demanded nor accepted by gods, but were performed to satisfy either the vindictive anger of cruel and tormenting 'daemons,' or in some cases "the wild and despotic passions (ἔρωτας) of 'daemons' who could not and would not have carnal intercourse with carnal beings. Just as Heracles besieged Oechalia to win a girl, so these strong and violent 'daemons,' demanding a human soul that is shut up within a body, and being unable to have bodily intercourse therewith, bring pestilences and famines upon cities and stir up wars and tumults, until they get and enjoy the object of their love." And reversely, he continues, some 'daemons' have punished with death men who have forced their love upon them; and he refers to the story of a man who violated a nymph and was found afterwards with his head severed from his body[1]. The whole passage betrays clearly enough what was the popular belief which Plutarch here set himself so to explain as to safeguard the goodness of the gods; but perhaps the end of it is the most significant of all. Plutarch forgets that a nymph, if she is a 'daemon,' is by his own hypothesis incapable of bodily intercourse; in this case then his attempted explanation is not even logically sound, and his conception of a purely spiritual 'daemon' is a failure; but at the same time, save for this invention, he is following the popular belief of both ancient and modern Greece that carnal intercourse between man and nymph is possible but is fraught with grave peril to the man[2]. It is impossible then to doubt that in the earlier part of the passage he was explaining away a popular belief by means of the same hypothesis. He himself would hold that spiritual 'daemons' demanded human sacrifice because they lusted after a soul or spirit confined out of their reach in a body until death severed it therefrom; but the popular

[1] Plutarch, *de defectu orac.* cap. 14 (p. 417).
[2] See above, p. 139.

belief, which he is at pains to emend, was that corporeal gods demanded human sacrifice because they lusted after the person who, by death, would be sent, body and soul, to be wed with them.

There is good reason then to suppose that in old time death may have been even inflicted as the means of effecting wedlock between men and gods; and that the mystic rite of union between Dionysus and the wife of the Athenian magistrate was based on the same fundamental idea as the mysteries of Demeter and Persephone or of Aphrodite. Though in this instance, when once human sacrifice had been given up, all suggestion of death was, so far as we know, removed from the solemnity, yet the repetition year by year of a ceremony of marriage between the god and a mortal woman representing his worshippers might still keep bright in their minds those 'happier hopes' of the like bliss laid up for themselves hereafter.

This particular rite escaped the notice, or at any rate the malice, of Clement; but Dionysus does not for all that go unscathed. Clement fastens upon a legend concerning him, which, however widely ancient Greek feeling in the matter of sex differed from modern, cannot but have seemed to some of the ancients[1] themselves to be a reproach and stain upon the honour of their god. The story of Dionysus and Prosymnus, as told by Clement[2], must be taken as read. But those who will investigate it for themselves will see that the same idea of death being followed by close intercourse with the gods is present there also. That this was the inner meaning of the peculiarly offensive story is shown by a curious comment of Heraclitus upon it, which Clement quotes—*ωὐτὸς δὲ Ἀίδης καὶ Διόννσος*[3], 'Hades and Dionysus are one'; whence it follows that union with Dionysus is a synonym for that 'marriage with Hades' which elsewhere, in both ancient and modern times, is a common presentment of death.

Again in the Sabazian mysteries, which some connect with Dionysus and others with Zeus, the little that is known of the ritual favours the view that here also the *motif* was the marriage of the deity with his worshippers. According to Clement[4], the subject-matter of these mysteries was a story that Zeus, having become by Demeter the father of Persephone, seduced in turn his own daughter,

[1] Not so, however, to Artemidorus. Cf. *Oneirocr.* I. 80.
[2] *Protrept.* § 34. [3] *l. c.* [4] *Protrept.* § 16.

having as a means to that end transformed himself into a snake. That story, it may safely be said, is presented by Clement in its worst light; but the statement, that in the ritual the deity was represented by a snake, obtains some corroboration from Theophrastus, who says of the superstitious man, that if he see a red snake in his house he will invoke Sabazius[1]. Now the token of these mysteries for those who were being initiated in them was, according to Clement[2] again, 'the god pressed to the bosom' (*ὁ διὰ κόλπου θεός*); which phrase he explains by saying that the god was represented as a snake, which was passed under the clothing and drawn over the bosom of the initiated 'as a proof of the incontinence of Zeus.' Clearly then the act of initiation was the symbolic wedding of the worshipper with the deity worshipped; and it is probable that the union which was symbolized in this life was expected to be realised in the next.

Finally in the orgiastic worship of Cybele the same religious doctrine is revealed. Here to Attis seems to be assigned the same part as to Adonis in the mysteries of Aphrodite. He is the beloved of the goddess; he is lost and mourned for as dead; he is restored again from the grave to the goddess who loved him. And in all this he appears to be the representative of all Cybele's worshippers; for the ritual of initiation into her rites, if once again we may avail ourselves of Clement's statements, is strongly imbued with the idea of marriage between the goddess and her worshipper. The several acts or stages of initiation are summarised in four phrases: 'I ate out of the drum; I drank out of the cymbal; I carried the sacred vessel; I entered privily the bed-chamber—*ἐκ τυμπάνου ἔφαγον· ἐκ κυμβάλου ἔπιον· ἐκερνοφόρησα· ὑπὸ τὸν παστὸν ὑπέδυν*[3]. In the passage from which these phrases are culled there appears to be a certain confusion between the rites of Cybele and those of Demeter; but the fact that Clement shortly afterwards gives another formulary of Demeter's ritual is sufficient proof that he meant this present formulary, as indeed the mention of kettle-drum and cymbal[4]

[1] Theophr. *Char.* 28 (ed. Jebb).
[2] *l. c.*
[3] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* II. 15.
[4] The cymbal certainly belonged to Demeter also (see Miss Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 562) but not, I think, the kettle-drum.

suggests, to apply to the mysteries of Cybele[1]. It appears then that the final act or stage of initiation consisted in the secret admission of the worshipper to the bed-chamber of the goddess. Such ritual can have borne only one interpretation. It clearly constituted a promise of wedded union between the initiated and their deity. Viewed in this light even the emasculation of the priests of Cybele may more readily be understood; it may have been the consecration of their virility to the service of the goddess, a final and convincing pledge of celibacy in this life, in return for which they aspired to be blest by wedlock with their goddess hereafter.

The mention of the goddess' bed-chamber in the above passage is of considerable interest. The παστός (or παστάς) in relation to a temple meant the same thing as it often meant in relation to an ordinary house, an inner room or recess screened off, and in particular a bridal chamber. Such provision for the physical comfort of the deity was probably not rare. Pausanias tells us that on the right of the vestibule in the Argive Heraeum there was a couch (κλίνη) for Hera[2], and he seems to speak of it as if it were a common enough piece of temple furniture. So too at Phlya in Attica, where were held the very ancient mystic rites 'of her who is called the Great,' there was a bridal chamber (παστάς), where, it has rightly been argued, there 'must have been enacted a mimetic marriage[3].' Again Clement of Alexandria speaks of a παστός of Athena in the Parthenon, and makes it quite clear by the story which he relates that he understood the word in the sense of bed-chamber. The story is also for other reasons worth recalling, because it shows how the religious conception of marriage between men and gods was readily extended to the worship of other deities than those whose mysteries we have sought to unravel, and at the same time furnishes the only case known to me in which that mystic belief was prostituted to the base uses of flattery. The occasion was the reception accorded by the

[1] Psellus (*Quaenam sunt Graecorum opiniones de daemonibus*, 3, ed. Migne) refers the formulary to the rites of Demeter and Kore. But I cannot agree with Miss J. Harrison (*Prolegomena to the Study of Greek Religion*, p. 569) as to the importance of Psellus' testimony in any respect. He appears to me to give no more than a *résumé* of information derived from Clement's *Protreptica*, misunderstood and even more confused.

[2] Paus. II. 17. 3.

[3] Miss J. Harrison, *op. cit.* p. 536, commenting on *Philosophumena*, ed. Cruice, v. 3.

Athenians to Demetrius Poliorcetes. Not content with hailing him as a god in name, they went so far in their mean-spirited subjection as to set up a temple, at the place where he dismounted from his horse on entering their city, to Demetrius the Descender (Καταιβάτης)[1], while on every side altars were erected to him. But their grossest piece of flattery was a master-piece of grotesque impiety, and met with a fitting reward. A marriage was arranged between him (the most notorious profligate of his age) and Athena. 'He however,' we are told, 'disdained the goddess, being unable to embrace the statue, but took with him to the Acropolis the courtesan Lamia, and polluted the bed-chamber of Athena, exhibiting to the old virgin the postures of the young courtesan[2].' Even that contemptuous response to the Athenians' flattery did not abash them, but, finding that he did not favour their acknowledged deity, they determined to deify his acknowledged favourite, and erected a temple to Lamia Aphrodite[3].

But such travesties of holy things were rare; and this one notorious case excited the contempt alike of the man[4] to whom the flattery was paid and of all posterity—a contempt which teaches, hardly less clearly than the indignation excited a century earlier by the supposed profanation of the mysteries, in what reverence and high esteem the idea of marriage between men and gods was generally held.

Even Lucian, in whom reverence was a less pronounced characteristic than humour, condemns seriously enough a parody of the mysteries of Eleusis which occurred in his own day; and his account of it at the same time shows once more that the marriage of men and gods was the very essence of the mysteries. The impostor Alexander, he says, instituted rites with carrying of torches (δᾳδουχία) and exposition of the sacred ceremonies (ἱεροφαντία) lasting for three days. "On the first there was a proclamation, as at Athens, as follows: 'If any atheist, Christian, or Epicurean hath come to spy upon the holy rites, let him begone, and let the faithful be initiated with heaven's blessing.' Then

[1] A title under which both Zeus and Hermes were known; see Aristoph. *Pax*, 42, and Schol. *ibid.* 649.

[2] Clem. Alex. *Protrept.* § 54.

[3] Athen. VI. p. 253 A. Shortly afterwards he quotes a song (253 D) in which it is the name of Demeter which is coupled with that of Demetrius.

[4] Athen. VI. 253 A, and 261 B.

first of all there was an expulsion of intruders. Alexander himself led the way, crying 'Out with Christians,' and the whole multitude shouted in answer 'Out with Epicureans.' Then was enacted the story of Leto in child-bed and the birth of Apollo, and his marriage with Coronis and the birth of Asclepius; and on the second day the manifestation of Glycon and the god's birth[1]. And on the third day was the wedding of Podalirius and Alexander's mother; this was called the Torch-day, for torches were burnt. And finally there was the love of Selene and Alexander, and the birth of his daughter now married to Rutilianus[2]. Our Endymion-Alexander was now torch-bearer and exponent of the rites. And he lay as it were sleeping in the view of all, and there came down to him from the roof—as it were Selene from heaven—a certain Rutilia, a very beautiful woman, the wife of one of Caesar's household-officers, who was really in love with Alexander and was loved by him, and she kissed the rascal's eyes and embraced him in the view of all, and, if there had not been so many torches, worse would perhaps have followed (*τάχα ἄν τι καὶ τῶν ὑπὸ κόλπου ἐπράττετο*)[3]."

The inferences which may be drawn from this narrative are, first, that the mysteries in general, while reproducing in some dramatic form the whole story of the deities concerned, culminated in the representation of a mystic marriage between men and gods; (the birth of a child was also represented or announced in this parody, as we know that it was at Eleusis[4], but it had, I am inclined to think, no mystic significance otherwise than as proof of the consummation of that marriage;) and, secondly, that the wild charges of indecency brought by early Christian writers against the mysteries are baseless; for Lucian condemns a much lesser license in this parody than that which they attributed to the genuine rites.

Thus our examination of the mysteries, so far as they are known to us, tends to prove that the doctrines revealed in them to the initiated were simply a development of certain vaguer popular ideas which have been prevalent among the Greek folk from the

[1] Glycon was Alexander's new god, a re-incarnation of Asclepius, born in the form of a snake out of an egg discovered by Alexander.

[2] A superstitious old Roman entrapped by Alexander.

[3] Lucian, *Alexander seu Pseudomantis*, cap. 38—39 (II. 244 ff.).

[4] See Miss J. Harrison, *op. cit.* pp. 549 ff.

classical age down to our own day. The people entertained hopes that this physical life would continue in a similar form after death; the mysteries gave definite assurance of that immortality by exhibiting to the initiated Persephone or Adonis or Attis restored from the lower world in bodily form; and though that exhibition was in fact merely a dramatic representation, yet to the eyes of religious ecstasy it seemed just as much a living reality as does the risen Christ in the modern celebration of Easter. The people again were wont to think and to speak of death as a marriage into the lower world; the mysteries showed to the initiated certain representatives of mankind who by death, or even in life, had been admitted to the felicity of wedlock with deities, and thereby confirmed the faithful in their happier hopes of being in like manner themselves god-beloved and of sharing the life of gods.

Since then there is good reason to believe that this was in effect the secret teaching of the mysteries, it would naturally be expected that human marriage should have been reckoned as it were a foretaste of that union with the divine which was promised hereafter, and also that death should have been counted the hour of its approaching fulfilment; in other words, if my view of the mysteries is correct, it would almost inevitably follow that the mysteries should have been brought into close association both with weddings and with funerals. This expectation is confirmed by the facts.

An ordinary wedding was treated as something akin to initiation into the mysteries. An inscription of Cos[1], relating to the appointment of priestesses of Demeter, mentions among other duties certain services on the occasion of weddings; and the brides, who are the recipients of these services, are divided into two classes, *αἱ τελεύμεναι* and *αἱ ἐπινυμφευόμεναι*, the maidens who are being 'initiated,' and the widows who are being married again; a woman's first marriage in fact is called by a religious document her initiation, and Demeter's priestesses are charged therewith. Nor was this usage or idea confined to Cos; Plutarch speaks of services rendered by the priestess of Demeter in the solemnisation of matrimony as part of an 'ancestral rite[2]'; while

[1] Paton, *Inscr. of Cos*, 386, cited by Rouse, *Greek Votive Offerings*, p. 246.
[2] Plutarch, *Conjug. Praec. ad init.*

the term τέλος was commonly used both of the mystic rites and of marriage, and τέλειοι might denote the newly-wed[1].

The same thought seems also to have inspired another custom associated with marriage. The newly-wed, we hear, sometimes attended a representation of the marriage of Zeus and Hera[2], an ἱερὸς γάμος which formed the subject of mystic drama or legend all over Greece[3]. The widely extended cults of Hera under the titles of Maiden (παρθένος or παῖς) and of Bride (τελεία or νυμφευομένη) appear to have been closely interwoven; indeed for a full appreciation of the Greek conception of the goddess they must be treated as complementary. They are well interpreted by Farnell. Rejecting the theory of physical symbolism, he suggests 'a more human explanation. Hera was essentially the goddess of women, and the life of women was reflected in her; their maidenhood and marriage were solemnised by the cults of Hera Παρθένος and Hera Τελεία or Νυμφευομένη, and the very rare worship of Hera Χήρα might allude to the not infrequent custom of divorce and separation[4].' With Hera the Widow we are not here concerned, but only with the higher conceptions of Zeus and Hera as expressed in the representation of the 'sacred marriage'; the bride and bridegroom who looked upon that saw in it, we may be sure, not a symbolical representation of the seasons and the productive powers of the earth, but rather the divine prototype of human marriage. It reminded them that deities, like mortals, were married and given in marriage, and it imparted to their wedding a sacramental character, making it at once a foretaste and a gage of that close communion with the gods which, when death the dividing line between mortals and immortals should once be passed, awaited the blessed among mankind.

Other small points too suggest the same trend of thought. The preliminaries of a wedding often comprised a sacrifice to Zeus Teleios and Hera Teleia[5], and were called προτέλεια as being the 'preliminaries of initiation' into that mystery, of which

[1] Schol. *ad Soph. Antig.* 1241.
[2] Photius, *Lex. Rhet.* Vol. II. p. 670 (ed. Porson), cited by Farnell, *Cults of the Greek States*, I. p. 245.
[3] For the chief references, see Farnell, *loc. cit.*
[4] Farnell, *op. cit.* p. 191.
[5] Diod. Sic. v. 73; Pollux III. 38. Cf. Farnell, *op. cit.* p. 246.

the sacred marriage, enacted before the now wedded pair, was the full revelation[1]. Again these preliminaries always included the solemn ablution[2] of which I have spoken above, and in this resembled the preparations for admittance to the mysteries. Moreover an instance is recorded in which this ablution was itself invested with the significance of a wedding between the human and the divine. The maidens of the Troad before marriage were wont to unrobe and bathe themselves in the Scamander; and the prayer which they made to the river-god, whose bed they entered, was, 'Receive thou, Scamander, my virginity[3].' Finally the first night on which the wedded pair came together was known as the 'mystic night' (*νὺξ μυστική*)[4], a term not a little suggestive of the great night of Demeter's mysteries when to the eyes of the initiated was displayed the secret proof and promise of wedlock between men and gods hereafter. In short the ceremonies of a wedding by one means or another proclaimed it to be a form of initiation, and the estate of marriage was to the Greeks, as our prayer-book calls it, 'an excellent mystery.'

Hence naturally followed the belief that the unmarried and the uninitiated shared the same fate in the future life. One conception of the punishment of the uninitiated was, according to Plato[5], that they should carry water in a sieve to a broken jar; and this, as is well known, was also the lot of the Danaids in the nether world. Commenting on these facts Dr Frazer says, 'It is possible that the original reason why the Danaids were believed to be condemned to this punishment in hell was not so much that they murdered, as that they did not marry, the sons of Aegyptus. According to one tradition indeed they afterwards married other husbands (Paus. III. 12. 2); but according to another legend they were murdered by Lynceus, apparently before marriage (Schol. on Euripides, *Hecuba*, 886). They may therefore have been chosen as types of unmarried women, and their punishment need not have been peculiar to them but may have

[1] Pollux, *l. c.* *ταύτῃ* (*τῇ* "Ηρᾳ) *τοῖς προτελείοις προὐτέλουν τὰς κόρας.*

[2] Cf. Plutarch, *Amator. Narrat.* 1, where the girls of Haliartus are said to have bathed themselves in the spring Cissoessa immediately before making the sacrifices just mentioned, and evidently as part of the same ritual.

[3] [Aeschines] *Epist.* 10, p. 680.

[4] Chariton IV. 4.

[5] *Gorgias*, p. 493 B.

been the one supposed to await all unmarried persons in the nether world[1].' A passage of Lucian, which appears to have been overlooked in this connexion[2], converts the view of the Danaids which Dr Frazer considers possible into a practical certainty. The passage in point forms the conclusion of that dialogue in which Poseidon with the aid of Triton plots and carries out the rape of Amymone, the Danaid. She has just been seized and is protesting against her abduction and threatening to call her father, when Triton intervenes: 'Keep quiet, Amymone,' he says, 'it is Poseidon.' And the girl rejoins, 'Oh, Poseidon you call him, do you?' and then turning to her ravisher, 'What do you mean, sirrah, by handling me so roughly, and dragging me down into the sea? I shall go under and be drowned, miserable girl.' And Poseidon answers, 'Do not be frightened, you shall come to no harm; no, I will strike the rock here, near where the waves break, with my trident, and will let a spring burst up which shall bear your name, and you yourself shall be blessed and, unlike your sisters, shall not carry water when you are dead (*καὶ σὺ εὐδαίμων ἔσῃ καὶ μόνη τῶν ἀδελφῶν οὐχ ὑδροφορήσεις ἀποθανοῦσα*)[3].' The whole point of Poseidon's answer clearly depends upon the existence of a well-known belief that the Danaids were punished hereafter for remaining unmarried and that the punishment took the form of vainly fetching water for that bridal bath which was a necessary preliminary to a wedding; Amymone shall have a very thorough bridal bath, and the spring that bears her name shall be a monument of it, while she herself shall be 'blessed' by wedlock with Poseidon; thus shall she escape the fate of the unmarried. Clearly then there was no distinction between the uninitiated and the unmarried; both alike were doomed vainly to fetch water for those ablutions which preceded initiation into the mysteries or into matrimony; and once again the conception of marriage as a mystic and sacramental rite akin to the rites of Eleusis is clearly revealed.

[1] Frazer, *ad Pausan.* x. 31. 9 (vol. v. p. 389).

[2] I cannot pretend to have gone into the whole literature of the subject, but I find no reference to this passage either in Dr Frazer's *Pausanias*, *l. c.*, or in Miss Harrison's *Proleg. to Study of Gk Relig.* pp. 614 ff., where the same topic is fully discussed.

[3] Lucian, *Dial. Marin.* 6. 3.

It may further be noted here that this idea of the punishment of the unmarried completely explains the custom, on which I have already touched, of erecting a water-pitcher (λουτροφόρος) over the grave of unmarried persons. This intimated, according to Eustathius[1], that the person there buried had never taken the bath which both bride and bridegroom were wont to take before marriage. But this must not be taken to mean that the water-pitcher was erected as a symbol of the punishment which the dead person was supposed to be undergoing; this was not an idea which his relatives and friends, even if they had held it, would have wished to blazon abroad. One might as soon expect to find depicted on a modern tombstone the worm that dieth not and the fire that is not quenched. No; the water-pitcher was not a symbol, it was an instrument; for my part I have little faith in the existence of any symbols in popular religion which are not in origin at least instruments; and the purpose to which this instrument was put was to supply the dead person with that wedding-bath which he had not taken in life, and without which he would vainly strive in the under-world to prepare himself for divine wedlock. The water-pitcher was not commemorative, but preventive, of future punishment. Its erection was not a warning to the living, but a service to the dead.

Thus then the evidence for the intimate association of the mysteries, or of the main idea which runs through them, with human weddings is complete and, I hope, convincing; and the custom of the water-pitcher, which concludes it, fitly introduces at the same time the evidence for the association of the same idea with funerals. This is equally plentiful. The vague conception of death as a wedding, which as I have shown was elaborated in the mysteries, has of course already been exemplified in all those passages of ancient literature and modern folk-songs which I have adduced, and I have found in it also the motive for the assimilation of funeral-customs to the customs of marriage. But the evidence that the actual doctrines of the mysteries, in which more definite expression was given to that vague idea, were closely associated with death and funeral-custom is to be found rather in epitaphs and sepulchral monuments.

[1] Eustath. *ad Hom. Il.* XXIII. 141.

The tone of the epitaphs may be sufficiently illustrated by a single couplet:

Οὐκ ἐπιδὼν νύμφεια λέχη κατέβην τὸν ἄφυκτον
Γόργιππος ξανθῆς Φερσεφόνης θάλαμον[1].

'I, Gorgippus, lived not to look upon a bridal bed ere I went down to the chamber of bright-haired Persephone which none may escape.' There is naturally here a note of lament, as befits any epitaph, and more especially that of one who dies young and unmarried; but none the less there is an anticipation—justified, we may think, if we will, by some ceremony of bridal ablution performed for the dead man by his friends—that his death is a wedding with the goddess of the under-world; and indeed the phrase Φερσεφόνης θάλαμος, 'the bridal chamber of Persephone,' recurs with some frequency in this class of epitaphs[2].

Considered collectively, such epitaphs would suggest a distinctly offensive conception of Persephone; but in each taken separately, as it was composed, it will be allowed, I think, that if there is supreme audacity, there is equal sublimity. It is just these qualities which give pungency to a blasphemous parody of such epitaphs, in which the wit of Ausonius exposes the worst possible aspect of a religious conception which to the pure-minded was wholly pure. My apology for quoting lines which I will not translate must be the fact that a caricature is often no less instructive than a true portrait. The mock epitaph concludes as follows:

Sed neque functorum socius miscebere vulgo
Nec metues Stygios flebilis umbra lacus:
Verum aut Persephonae Cinyreius ibis Adonis,
Aut Jovis Elysii tu catamitus eris[3].

Ausonius in jest bears an unpleasant resemblance to Clement in earnest; both perverted to their uttermost a doctrine which commanded nothing but reverence from faithful participants in the mysteries.

Akin to these epitaphs are certain tablets which recently have

[1] *Anthol. Pal.* VII. 507.
[2] For other examples see Lenormant, *Monographie de la voie sacrée éleusinienne*, pp. 50 f., where also the above example is quoted.
[3] Auson. *Epitaph.* no. 33.

been fully discussed by Miss Jane Harrison[1], and have been shown to be of Orphic origin. They were buried with the dead, and for this reason were more outspoken in their references to the mystic doctrines than was permissible in epitaphs exposed to the vulgar gaze. The most complete of these tablets is one which was found near Sybaris, and, with the exception of the last sentence of all, the inscription is in hexameter verse. Miss Harrison, to whose work I am wholly indebted for this valuable evidence, translates as follows[2]:

'Out of the pure I come, Pure Queen of Them Below,
Eukles and Eubouleus and the other Gods immortal.
For I also avow me that I am of your blessed race,
But Fate laid me low and the other Gods immortal
. . . . . starflung thunderbolt.
I have flown out of the sorrowful weary Wheel.
I have passed with eager feet to the Circle desired.
I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina, Queen of the Underworld.
I have passed with eager feet from the Circle desired.
Happy and Blessed One, thou shalt be God instead of mortal.
A kid I have fallen into milk.'

The gist of the document which the dead man takes with him is then briefly this. He claims to have been pure originally and of the same race as his gods; but as a man he was mortal and exposed to death, and in this respect differed from his gods. He states however that he has performed certain ritual acts which entitle him to be re-admitted to the pure fellowship of the gods now that death is passed. And the answer comes, 'Thou shalt be God instead of mortal.'

Now here I wish to consider one only of these ritual acts—that one of which the meaning is clearest—*Δεσποίνας δ' ὑπὸ κόλπον ἔδυν χθονίας βασιλείας*, which means, if I may give my own rendering, 'I was admitted to the embrace of Despoina, Queen of the under-world.' The phrase is one which repeats the idea which we have already seen expressed in the formulary of Cybele's rites, *ὑπὸ τὸν παστὸν ὑπέδυν*[3], 'I was privily admitted to the bridal chamber,' and in the token of the Sabazian mysteries, *ὁ διὰ κόλπου θεός*[4], 'the god pressed to the bosom'; and Lucian's final phrase in his account of Alexander's mock-mysteries shows

[1] *Prolegomena to Study of Gk Religion*, pp. 573 ff.
[2] *op. cit.* p. 586; Kaibel, *C.I.G.I.S.*, 641.
[3] See above, p. 586.
[4] See above, p. 586.

a kindred phrase, *τὰ ὑπὸ κόλπου*[1], as an euphemism of the same kind[2]. The Orphic therefore no less than others based his claim to future happiness on the fact that he had performed a ritual act, of the nature of a sacrament, which constituted a pledge that the wedlock between him and his goddess foreshadowed here should be consummated hereafter.

Even more abundant evidence is furnished by sepulchral monuments; and in support of my views I cannot do better than quote two high authorities who coincide in their verdict upon the meaning of the scenes represented. In reference to those scenes 'in which death is conceived in the guise of a marriage' Furtwängler writes: 'The monuments belonging to this class are extraordinarily numerous, and exhibit very different methods of treating the idea which they carry out. A relief upon a sarcophagus from the Villa Borghese shows the God of the dead in the act of carrying down the fair Kore to be his bride in the lower world. Above the steeds of his chariot, which are already disappearing into the depths of the earth, flies Eros as guide. The bride however appears to be going only under compulsion and after some struggle; the look of the bridegroom expresses sternness rather than gentleness; and the mother who sits with face averted seems to exclude all thoughts of the daughter's return. Only in the torches which the guide carries in his hand, in the snakes which are looking upward, and in the observant attitude of Hecate, can a suggestion of the return be found.

'On another sarcophagus—from Nazzara—which represents the same marriage-journey, Eros is not merely the guide of the steeds, but aids the bridegroom in carrying off Kore, so that in this case the struggle with death takes purely the form of a struggle with love. At the same time the mother is driving along with her chariot, thereby signifying the renewal of life, which is yet more clearly betokened in the ploughman and the sower at her side.

[1] See above, p. 589.

[2] I am forced by these considerations to dissent from Miss Harrison's view as expressed *op. cit.* p. 594, 'Here the symbolism seems to be of birth rather than of marriage,' and again 'this rite of birth or adoption...': and indeed this view seems hardly to tally with that which she suggests later (p. 600), "'Burial itself may well have been to them (the Pythagoreans) as to Antigone a mystic marriage: 'I have sunk beneath the bosom of Despoina, Queen of the Underworld.'"

'In a yet gentler spirit we see the same journey conceived in a vase-painting from lower Italy. Here there is a look of gentleness on Hades' face; the bride accompanies him gladly, and even takes an affectionate farewell of her mother, who appears to acquiesce in her departure. In this case too Eros is flying above the horses, and is turned towards the lovers, while in front of him there flies a dove, the bird sacred to the goddess of love. Hecate with torches guides the steeds; near at hand waits Hermes to escort the procession; and above the whole scene the stars are shining, as if to indicate the new life in the region of death.

'In another form, exalted to a yet higher holiness, the same marriage is repeated in the sphere of Dionysus-worship. Thus on a cameo in the Vatican, Dionysus is represented driving with his bride, Ariadne, in a brightly-decked triumphal car. Holy rapture is manifested on the features of both, and on top of the chariot stands a Cupid directing it. Dionysus is arrayed in the doe-skin, and holds in his left hand a *thyrsus*, in his right a goblet; Ariadne is carrying ears of corn and poppy-heads, and has her hair wreathed with vine-leaves. The car is drawn by Centaurs of both sexes, with torches, drinking-horns, and musical instruments. The idea which underlies this scene is the reproduction of Life out of Death; Hades has issued forth again for a new marriage-bond with Kore in the realm of light, appearing now rejuvenated in the form of Dionysus, just as his bride assumes the form of Ariadne, and because the power of death is broken behind him, his car likewise becomes a triumphal car.

'Just as the marriage of Zeus in the realm of light became a type for men in this life, so the marriage of Hades, or of Dionysus representing him, developed into a similar prototype for the dead. Since that which is true of Death bears directly upon the actual dead, it was quite natural that gradually the process of death came to be considered in general as a wedding with the deities of death. With this conception too harmonize those wedding-scenes which are so common and conspicuous on funeral monuments, as well as the often-recurring scenes from the joyous cycle of Dionysus-myths[1].'

[1] Furtwängler, *Die Idee des Todes*, p. 293.

Two brief comments may be made upon this passage. First, Furtwängler clearly recognises in Dionysus a mere substitute for Hades, and thus confirms my interpretation of the strange legend concerning Dionysus and Prosymnus[1]. We noticed that the somewhat obscure observation of Heraclitus (as quoted by Clement) upon that story contained the words 'Dionysus and Hades are one and the same'; and we now see that in art too the same identification was made, and that the marriage of a mortal with Dionysus was used to typify the future marriage of the dead with their gods. The reason for this identification seems simply to be that the cults in which the two gods figured, although differing in outward form, were felt to express one and the same idea—namely the conception of death as a form of marriage; and the tendency to identify in such cases was carried so far that the god Dionysus was even, we are told, identified with the mortal Adonis[2], presumably because the worship of each, as I have shown above, turned upon this one cardinal doctrine.

Secondly, Furtwängler points out that the marriage of Zeus and Hera represented for living men the same doctrine as the marriage of Hades and Persephone (or of Dionysus and Ariadne) represented for the dead. The truth of this is well illustrated by the close resemblance between Aristophanes' picture of Hera's wedding and those funeral monuments and vases which Furtwängler describes; for there too 'golden-winged Eros held firm the reins, and drave the wedding-car of Zeus and blessed Hera[3].' In other words, this Olympian marriage was only one among several mystic marriages which all conveyed, though in diverse form, the same lesson, that marriage was the perfection of divine life no less than of human life, and therefore that hereafter when men, or at any rate the blessed and initiated among men, should come to dwell with their gods, no bond of communion between gods and men could be perfect short of the marriage-bond.

It was natural enough that the drama of Hera's wedding with Zeus should most often have been chosen to be played at an ordinary wedding, because it would not obtrude thoughts of death upon a joyous event with such insistence as most of the other

[1] See above, p. 585.
[2] Plutarch, *Sympos.* IV. 5. 3.
[3] Aristoph. *Aves*, 1737.

religious legends which reposed upon the same fundamental doctrine; but sometimes, we know, it was the priestesses of Demeter who officiated at wedding-ceremonies, and in those cases it cannot be doubted that it was Persephone and not Hera who was the divine prototype of the bride, and the thought that her wedding was a wedding with the god of death could not have been excluded. At funerals, on the other hand, the story of Zeus and Hera which was preferred at weddings owing to its less obvious allusion to death, would for that same reason have found less favour than those other marriage-legends in which the identity of death with marriage was more clearly enunciated; and of these, owing to the exceptional reverence in which the Eleusinian mysteries were held, the story of Persephone seems to have been among the most frequent. Yet in the picture drawn by Aristophanes at which we have just glanced, for one subtle touch which suggests the connexion of Hera's wedding with human weddings, there is another subtle touch which suggests its relation with human death. The first is an epithet applied to Eros who drove the wedding-car—the epithet *ἀμφιθαλής*, used of one who has both parents living[1]. The allusion to human weddings is clear. It was no doubt imperative in old time, as it still is, in Greece, that anyone who attended upon a bride or bridegroom, as for instance the bearer of water for the bridal bath, should have both parents living; and the use of the same term in reference to Eros, the attendant upon Zeus and Hera, marks the intimate connexion between the divine marriage and the marriage of living men and women. But another epithet in the passage conveys no less clear an allusion to the marriage of those, whom men call dead, with their deities. Hera is named *εὐδαίμων*, a word which, meaning 'favoured by God,' may seem strangely applied to one who herself was divine[2]. But it was selected by Aristophanes for a good reason; by the word *εὐδαιμονία* was commonly denoted that future bliss which the initiated believed to consist in wedlock with their deities. Like *θεοφιλής*, 'god-beloved,' the term *εὐδαίμων*, 'blessed,' was, so to speak, a catch-word of the mysteries[3]; and the applica-

[1] Cf. Schol. *ad Aristoph. l. c.*

[2] This, I am aware, is not an unique case. Plato applies the same epithet to the gods as a whole, but above all to Eros, clearly, I think, with something of the same significance. See Plato, *Sympos.* § 21, p. 195 A.

[3] Cf. Theo Smyrnaeus, *Math.* I. 18; Aristid. *Eleusin.* p. 415; Plato, *Phaedrus*, p. 48.

tion of it to Hera in Aristophanes' ode brings the legend of Hera's marriage into rank with those other wedding-stories whose actual plot hinged upon the identity of death and marriage. Thus though one legend might be more appropriate in its externals to one occasion, and another legend to another occasion, the ultimate and fundamental idea of them all was single and the same.

This view is boldly championed by the second authority whom I proposed to quote upon the subject of mystic marriage-scenes depicted on funeral-monuments. 'The idea,' says Lenormant, 'of mystic union in death is frequently indicated in the scenes represented upon *sarcophagi* and painted vases. But for the most part the idea is expressed there only in an allusive manner, which depends upon the identification which this marriage-scene established between the dead person and the deity, by means of such subjects as the carrying off of Cephalus by Aurora, or Orithyia by Boreas, or the love-story of Aphrodite and Adonis[1].' 'Thus,' he explains, 'a girl carried off (by death) from her parents was simply a bride betrothed to the infernal god, and was identified with Demeter's maiden daughter, the victim of the passion and violence of Hades; a young man cut off by an early fate figured as the beautiful Adonis, snatched away by Persephone from the love of Aphrodite, and brought, in spite of himself, to the bed of the queen of the lower world[2].' The identification which Lenormant sees in these several instances is an identification, I suppose, not of personalities but of destinies. The popular religion of ancient Greece shows little trace of any pantheistic view which would have contemplated the absorption of the personality of the dead man or woman into that of any god or goddess. Indeed the very number of the personally distinct deities with whom, on such an hypothesis, the dead would have been identified, as well as that continuance of sexual difference in the future life which is postulated by the very doctrine before us, precludes all thought of personal identification. Rather it is the future destiny of the dead person which was identified with the destiny of the deity or hero whose marriage was represented on sarcophagus or *cippus* or commemorative vase[3]. The lot of Kore or Ariadne or Orithyia prefigured the lot of mortal

[1] Lenormant, *Monographie de la voie sacrée éleusinienne*, p. 54.

[2] *l. c.*

[3] For a long list of such monuments dealing with the story of Persephone, see Clarac, *Musée de Sculpt. anc. et mod.*—'Bas-reliefs Grecs et Romains,' pp. 209—10.

women hereafter; the fortunes of Adonis or Cephalus typified those of mortal men; and all the marriage-scenes alike, whatever the differences of presentation, revealed the hope and the promise of wedlock hereafter between mankind and their deities.

But Lenormant mentions one vase-painting[1] in which this fundamental doctrine is taught not by parables of mythology, but more overtly and directly. The scene depicted is the marriage of a youth, whose name, Polyetes, is in pathetic contrast with his short span of years spent upon earth, with a goddess Eudaemonia (or 'Bliss') in the lower world. In this deity Lenormant sees 'the infernal goddess under an euphemistic name.' Nor could any more significant name have been used. It has already been pointed out that *εὐδαιμονία* was a term much favoured by the initiated in the mysteries, and was openly used by them to denote that future bliss which secretly was understood to consist in divine wedlock. Hence the scene upon this vase would at once suggest to those who were familiar with the doctrines of the mysteries, that the youth, being presumably of the number of the initiated, had found in death the realisation of his happy hopes and had entered into blissful union with the goddess of the lower world.

To sum up briefly: we have seen alike in the literature of ancient Greece and in the folk-songs of modern Greece that death has commonly been conceived by the Hellenic race in the guise of a wedding; a review of marriage-customs and funeral-customs both ancient and modern has re-affirmed the constant association of death and marriage, and has shown how deep-rooted in the minds of the common people that idea must have been which produced a deliberate assimilation of funeral-rites to the ceremonies of marriage. Next we investigated the connexion of the mysteries with the popular religion, and saw reason to hold that, far from being subversive of it or alien to it, they inculcated doctrines which were wholly evolved from vaguer popular ideas always current in Greece. Finally we traced in many of those legends, on which the dramatic representations of the mysteries are known to have been based, a common *motif*, the idea that death is the entrance for men into a blissful estate of wedded union with their deities. And this religious ideal not only satisfies the condition of

[1] *Monographie de la voie sacrée éleusinienne*, p. 56.

agreement with, and evolution from, those popular views in which death figured somewhat vaguely as a form of wedding, but also proves to be the natural and necessary outcome of two religious sentiments with which earlier chapters have dealt; first, the ardent desire for close communion with the gods, and secondly, the belief that men's bodies as well as their souls survived death and dissolution; for if the body by means of its disintegration rejoined the soul in the nether world, and the human entity was then complete, enjoying the same substantial existence, the same physical no less than mental powers, which it had enjoyed in the upper world, and which the immortal gods enjoyed uninterrupted by death, then, since the same rite of marriage was the consummation both of divine life and of human life, men's yearning for close communion with their gods required for its ideal and perfect satisfaction the full union of wedlock; and the sacrament which assured men of this consummation was the highest development of the whole Greek religion, the mysteries.

Such a sacrament and such aspirations might well have offended even those Christians of early days, if such there were, who were willing to deal sympathetically with paganism; that those who were its declared enemies, and were ready to use against it the weapons of perversion and vituperation, found in this conception a vulnerable point, is readily understood. It is true indeed that in the very idea which they most vilified there was a certain curious analogy between the new religion and the old. Just as paganism allowed to each man or woman individually the hope of becoming the bridegroom or the bride of one of their many deities, so Christianity represented the Church, the whole body of the faithful collectively, as the bride of its sole deity. But the analogy is superficial only. The bond of feeling which united the Church with God was very differently conceived from that which drew together the pagans and their deities. The chastened 'charity' (*ἀγάπη*) of the Christians had little in common with the passionate love (*ἔρως*) with which the Greeks of old time had dared look upon their gods. Theirs was the Love that 'held firm the reins and drave the wedding-car of Zeus and blessed Hera[1]'; the Love that hovered above the steeds of Hades and changed for

[1] Aristoph. *Aves*, 1737.

Persephone the road of death into a road to bliss; the Love whom 'no immortal may escape nor any of mankind whose life passeth as a day, but whoso hath him is as one mad[1]'; and the only true consummation of such love was wedlock.

This conception necessarily implied the equality of men with their gods in the future life; and that future equality was sometimes represented as no more than a return to that which was in the beginning. 'One is the race of men with the race of gods; for one is the mother that gave to both our breath; yet are they sundered by powers wholly diverse, in that mankind is as naught, but heaven is builded of brass that abideth ever unshaken[2].' So sang Pindar of the past and of the present; but the Orphic tablet which has been already quoted carries on the thought into the future:

> 'Out of the pure I come, Pure Queen of Them Below,
> Eukles and Eubouleus and the other Gods immortal.
> For I also avow me that I am of your blessed race,
> But Fate laid me low . . .'

So far with Pindar. But the dead man's claims do not end there: 'I was admitted to the embrace of Despoina, Queen of the Underworld'; already had he received a foretaste of that divine wedlock which implied equality with the gods; and so there comes the answer, 'Happy and Blessed One, thou shalt be God instead of mortal.'

This idea commended itself even to thinkers who did not believe in bodily survival after death. Plato, in the *Phaedo*, where above all things is taught the perishable nature of the body and the immortality of the soul alone, yet avails himself of the belief that the pure among mankind shall attain even to godhead hereafter. To him the pure are not the initiated indeed, but the earnest strivers after wisdom. In his theory of retributive metempsychosis he surmises that those who have followed the lusts of the flesh shall hereafter enter the ranks of asses and other lustful beasts; that those who have wrought violence shall enter the ranks of wolves and hawks and kites; that those who have practised what is popularly accounted virtue, but without true understanding, shall enter the ranks of harmless and social creatures, bees, wasps, and ants, or even the ranks of men once

[1] Soph. *Antig.* 787 ff.

[2] Pind. *Nem.* VI. *init.*

more. 'But into the ranks of gods none may enter without having followed after wisdom and so departing hence wholly pure —none save the lover of knowledge[1].' What precise meaning Plato attached to his phrase 'to enter the ranks' (εἰς γένος ἐνδύεσθαι or ἀφικνεῖσθαι), to which he adheres throughout the passage, is a question which agitated the Neoplatonists[2] somewhat needlessly. The phrase is intended either literally throughout or allegorically throughout. If it be allegorical, the meaning must be that all human souls shall enter again into human bodies, but that they shall start this new phase of existence with the qualities of lust, violence, respectability, or real virtue and purity, acquired in the previous life—merely resembling, as nearly as men may, asses, wolves, bees, or gods. Now as regards the first three classes, this allegorical interpretation, if a little forced, is feasible enough; but what of the fourth class? Shall the soul which has attained purity, the very negation of fleshliness in Plato's view, suffer re-incarnation and struggle once more against the flesh? Surely the allegorical explanation is at once condemned. The phrase was intended literally[3]. Plato signified the re-incarnation of the lustful, the violent, and the merely respectable, in the forms of animals of like character, and he signified—I must not say the re-incarnation, for Plato's gods were spiritual and not carnal—but the regeneration of the pure in the form of gods. And in the same spirit Plutarch too contemplated the possibility of some men's souls becoming first heroes, and from heroes rising to the rank of 'daemons,' and from 'daemons' coming to share, albeit but rarely, in real godhead[4].

Thus even the highest aspirations of the most spiritually-minded of pagan thinkers owed much to the purely popular religion. The Orphic tablet links up the popular conception of death as a wedding with the Platonic conception of the deification of the soul. 'I was admitted to the embrace of Despoina, Queen of the underworld': 'Happy and Blessed One, thou shalt be God instead of mortal.'

But if Plato, even in his conception of a purely spiritual life hereafter, owed something to the popular religion, he drew upon it

[1] Plato, *Phaedo*, cap. 32, p. 82 B, C.
[2] See Geddes' notes *ad loc.*
[3] For other evidence confirming this view, see Geddes' notes *ad loc.*
[4] Plutarch, *de defect. orac.* cap. 10, p. 415.

far more freely in his conception of Love. In the *Symposium* one speech after another culminates in the assertion of that belief which found its highest expression in the mysteries. 'So then I say,' says Phaedrus, 'that Love is the most venerable of the gods, the most worthy of honour, the most powerful to grant virtue and blessedness unto mankind both in life and after death[1].' And in the same tone too Eryximachus: 'He it is that wields the mightiest power and is the source for us of all blessedness and of our power to have loving fellowship both with one another and with the gods that are stronger than we[2].' And finally Aristophanes: It is Love, 'who in this present life gives us most joys by drawing like unto like, and for our hereafter displays hopes most high, if we for our part display piety towards the gods, that he will restore us to our erstwhile nature and will heal us and will make us happy and blessed[3].'

This is not Platonic philosophy but popular religion. Phrase after phrase reveals the origin of this conception of Love. The hopes most high were the hopes held forth by the mysteries; the blessedness and the loving fellowship with gods were the fulfilment of those hopes. In such language did men ever hint at the joys to which their mystic sacraments gave access. And Plato here ventures yet further. The author of those high hopes, the founder of that blessedness, he proclaims, is none other than Love —Love that appealed not to the soul only of the initiated, but to the whole man, both soul and body—Love that meant not only the yearning after wisdom and holiness and spiritual equality with the gods, but that same passion which drew together man and woman, god and goddess—the passion of mankind for their deities, fed in this life by manifold means of communion and even by sacramental union, satisfied hereafter in the full fruition of wedded bliss.

[1] Plato, *Symp.* § 7, p. 180.
[2] *ibid.* § 15, p. 188.
[3] *ibid.* § 19, p. 193.

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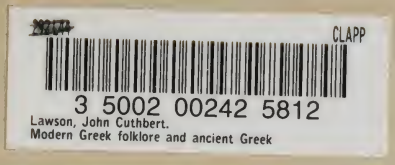


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